

**BRIGHTON AND HOVE INTERFAITH CONTACT GROUP**

# **How can ancient religious traditions serve us in our world today?**

*Numbers 15:10*

As a libation-offering, you shall offer half a *hin* of wine, the burning odours of which are pleasing to the Eternal One.

וְיִזֵּן תִּקְרִיב לִנְסֹךְ חֲצִי הַהֵינִן אֲשֶׁה  
רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה:

*Numbers 15:18b-19*



When you come to the land to which I am taking you, and you eat of the bread of the land, you shall surely set aside some of it, as an offering to the Eternal One.

בְּבֹאֲכֶם אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אָנִי  
מְבִיא אֲתֶכֶם שָׁמָּה: וְהָיָה  
בְּאֲכֹלְכֶם מִלֶּחֶם הָאָרֶץ תְּרִימוּ  
תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה:

*Numbers 15:38b*

They shall make themselves fringes on the corners of their garments, throughout all generations.

וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִית עַל כַּנְּפֵי  
בְּגָדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם:

## *S'fat Emet<sup>i</sup>*

In the wilderness, the Israelites had three great gifts: manna, the well, and the clouds of glory. Thus it was difficult for them to contemplate leaving the wilderness and entering the promised land. The Holy One, ever to be blessed, consoled them: some of the light of these three gifts remained to them. The commandment to separate bread and wine as an offering, these recall the manna and the well. And the commandment to surround oneself with fringes, this relates to the grace of the clouds of glory.

הי' להם במדבר ג' מתנות  
הטובות מן ובאר וענני  
כבוד. ולכן קשה להם לצאת  
מן המדבר. וניחם הקב"ה  
אותנו כי נשאר הארזה  
מאלה הג' מתנות. וחלה  
ונסכים הוא זכר ממן ובאר.  
וציצית בהי' החסד ענני  
הכבוד.



## *Dr Anna Urowitz-Freudenstein<sup>ii</sup>*

To fulfil the commandment of separating bread, the baker ritually removes a tiny portion of the raw dough and recites a specific blessing. When the Temple stood in Jerusalem, this consecrated portion was to be eaten by the priests. Since the destruction of the Temple in 70CE, the piece of separated dough is to be burned in the oven and thrown away. The commandment of separating bread allows us to take an ordinary act and elevate it to the spiritual. While eating the bread feeds the body, the ritual aspect of making the bread feeds the soul.

  
Brighton and Hove Progressive Synagogue



**GKW 16.ii.23**

<sup>i</sup> Rabbi Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter, known as the S'fat Emet after the title of his book, was a 19th-century Chassidic leader in eastern Poland. This is an extract from a sermon he gave for Parashat Sh'lach (Numbers 13:1-15:41) in 1885.

<sup>ii</sup> Adapted from Dr Urowitz-Freudenstein's contribution to Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Andrea L Weiss, eds, *The Torah: a women's commentary* (New York: URJ Press, 2008): 887.