

# HALACHIC AND HASHKAFIC ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

## 17 - MEZONOT BREAD AND THE GREAT PIZZA DEBATE OU ISRAEL CENTER - SUMMER 2016

1. אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא בְּמִסְכָּנָהּ תֹאכַל בֶּהּ לֶחֶם לֹא תִחַסֵּר כֹּל בֶּהּ אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲבָנֶיהָ בְּרֹזָל וּיְמַהֲרֶיהָ תִּתְחַצֵּב נְחֹשֶׁת: וְאָכַלְתָּ וּשְׂבַעְתָּ וּבִרְכַתְּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְךָ

דברים ח:ט-י

*The Torah singles out bread as the food on which there is a mitzvah to make a beracha*

2. מִצְמִיחַ<sup>1</sup> חֲצִיר<sup>2</sup> | לִפְהֶמָה<sup>3</sup> וְעֵשֶׂב<sup>4</sup> לְעִבְדָת<sup>5</sup> הָאֱדָם<sup>6</sup> לְהוֹצִיא<sup>7</sup> לֶחֶם<sup>8</sup> מִן הָאָרֶץ<sup>9</sup>:<sup>10</sup> טו וַיֵּן יִשְׁמַח לִבֵּב אֲנוּשׁ לְהַצְהִיל פְּנִים מִשְׁמֹן וְלֶחֶם לִבֵּב אֲנוּשׁ יִסְעֵד

תהלים קד:יד-טו

*David Hamelech in Tehillim describes bread as the food which satisfies above all others*

3. כִּיצַד מְבַרְכִין עַל הַפִּירוֹת? ... וְעַל פִּירוֹת הָאָרֶץ אוֹמֵר בּוֹרָא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה חוּץ מִן הַפֶּת שֶׁעַל הַפֶּת הוּא אוֹמֵר הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

משנה ברכות ו:א

*Based upon the 'chashivut' - importance - of bread identified in Tehillim, Chazal instituted a special beracha for bread based on the wording of the passuk - 'hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz'. They also instituted netilat yadayim on bread alone*

4. ... וְאִם אֵינוֹ לֹא מְבוּשֵׁל וְלֹא מְחוּבֵר, אֲלֵא מְפוֹרֵר דֶּק דֶּק, אַע"פ שֶׁאֵין בּוֹ כֹּזֵית וְלֹא תוֹאֵר לֶחֶם, מְבַרֵךְ עָלָיו הַמוֹצִיא וְבֵה"מ

שולחן ערוך אורח חיים סימן קסח:י

*The beracha on bread is hamotzi, no matter how small the piece is - even bread crumbs or matzo-meal require hamotzi (and washing hands but without a beracha)*

In addition to the beracha hamotzi, Chazal made another beracha - 'borei minei mezonot'. This was instituted on two separate types of food:-

- (i) Cooked dishes made from the 5 types of grain:- wheat, barley, spelt, oats and rye - e.g. pasta, oatmeal, noodles, matzo balls, farfel;
- (ii) Baked foods made from the 5 types of grain which are not bread because they are not made to be eaten as the main food in a meal, but rather as a snack.

5. רב יהודה הוה עסיק ליה לבריה בי רב יהודה בר חביבא, אייתו לקמייהו פת הבאה בכסנין. כי אתא, שמעינהו דקא מברכי המוציא. אמר להו: מאי ציצי דקא שמענא? דילמא המוציא לחם מן הארץ קא מברכיתו? - אמרי ליה: אין; דתניא רבי מונא אמר משום רבי יהודה: פת הבאה בכסנין מברכין עליה המוציא, ואמר שמואל: הלכה כרבי מונא. אמר להו: אין הלכה כרבי מונא אתמר. אמרי ליה: והא מר הוא דאמר משמיה דשמואל, לחמניות - מערבין בהן ומברכין עליהן המוציא: - שאני התם דקבע סעודתיה עליהו, אבל היכא דלא קבע סעודתיה עליהו - לא.

ברכות מב.

*Chazal discuss a food called 'pat haba'ah bekisnin'. This is a type of 'bread' which is not standardly used as bread for a main-course. The Gemara discusses whether the appropriate beracha is hamotzi or mezonot and concludes that the beracha is mezonot unless a person is using this food as bread for his meal, in which case the beracha is 'up-graded' to hamotzi*

6. פת הבאה בכיסנין, מברך עליו: בורא מיני מזונות, ולאחריו: ברכה אחת מעין שלש

שולחן ערוך אורח חיים סימן קסח סעיף ו

*The Shulchan Aruch rules that pat haba'ah bekisnin is mezonot*

7. (1) פת הבאה בכיסנין, יש מפרשים: פת שעשוי כמין כיסים שממלאים אותם דבש או סוקר ואגוזים ושקדים ותבלין ....  
 (2) וי"א שהיא עיסה שעירב בה דבש או שמן או חלב או מיני תבלין ואפאה, והוא שיהיה טעם תערובת המי פירות או התבלין ניכר בעיסה, וי"א שזו נקרא פת גמור, אלא אם כן יש בהם הרבה תבלין או דבש כמיני מתיקה שקורין לעקי"ך שכמעט הדבש והתבלין הם עיקר וכן נובגים;  
 (3) וי"מ שהוא פת, בין מתובלת בין שאינה מתובלת, שעושים אותם כעבים יבשים וכוססין אותם ....  
 והלכה כדברי כולם שלכל אלו הדברים נותנים להם דינים שאמרנו בפת הבאה בכיסנין

שולחן ערוך אורח חיים סימן קסח:

*The Rishonim disagree on what precisely is pas haba'ah bekisnin. There are 3 understandings:- (i) pie - ordinary bread dough baked with a sweet filling; (ii) cake - dough kneaded with added sugar, spices, wine and fruit juice etc; or (iii) crackers - ordinary bread dough baked in a brittle form<sup>1</sup>. These types of food, and any other food which is made solely as a snack food, will be mezonot (but see 9 below!)*

8. הרבה תבלין או דבש וכו' - ר"ל שכ"כ תבלין מעורב בהן עד שעל ידי זה יהיה מנכר התבלין בטעם יותר מהקמח וכן דבש ושמן וחלב צעינן שיהיה הרוז מהן ומיעוט מים שעי"ז נרגש מהן הטעם הרבה מאד עד שעי"ז הם העיקר וטעם העיסה טפל. וכן צלזור הראשון שכתב השו"ע שממלאין מהם צעינן ג"כ שיהיה המילוי הרבה כ"כ עד שעי"ז יהיה נרגש הטעם הרבה מאד

משנה ברורה סימן קסח ס"ק לג

*The Mishna Berura explains that, in category (ii), the Rema requires that the sweet taste of the added juice etc is dominant even over the taste of the flour and the the majority of the liquid kneaded with the dough be juice and the minority water so that the taste of the 'bread' will be very sweet*

**PROBLEM 1** - The only possible category into which to fit mezonot bread is (ii) - dough which is kneaded with fruit juice etc. In fact, mezonot bread is made with fruit juice. The problem is that the Rema ruled in 7 above that to qualify as mezonot under this category, the bread had to very noticeably sweet - like cake - so as to render it unfit to be used as normal bread (e.g. chocolate cake). Mezonot bread may sometimes taste a little different from other bread, but does it taste like cake? It is certainly not unfit to be used as bread - on the contrary, it is a bread substitute!

**Possible solution:** Some authorities (the Maharsham Da'at Torah 168:7) rule (unlike the Mishna Berura) that, if the dough is mixed with a majority fruit juice, the food is mezonot even if it does not taste of juice. Most poskim rule that one should not rely on this lechatchila. Rav S.Z. Auerbach zt'l did make mezonot in these circumstances, but only if the pat was eaten as a snack (see below). If the pat was made as a 'bread substitute' it may be hamotzi even according to this opinion.

**PROBLEM 2** - Even those poskim who are prepared to follow the Maharsham, agree that to qualify as a majority of fruit juice, the juice must be undiluted pure fruit juice. If the juice is made from a concentrate which is diluted with water, the resulting mixture will almost certainly NOT be majority juice over water.

**Possible solution :** If the bread is made entirely with fruit juice, it is mezonot even if it does not taste at all different from normal bread. Some bakers do this (e.g. with a raisin wine solution)

**PROBLEM 3** - Ashkenazim make hamotzi on matza, even though it is pat haba'ah bekisnin (category (iii) above). This is due to the fact that it has taken on a role as a main-course bread substitute. By the same token, mezonot bread should have the same din and be a hamotzi, regardless of how it was made! (N.B. Sefardim make mezonot on matza, except on Pesach when it is bread for them too. Ashkenazim still make mezonot on matza crackers).

1. These three opinions are, respectively, the positions of the Rach, the Rambam and Rav Hai Gaon

9. ... ואם אכל ממנו שיעור שאחרים רגילים לקבוע עליו, אף על פי שהוא לא שבע ממנו, מברך עליו: המוציא וברכת המזון

שולחן ערוך אורח חיים סימן קסח סעיף ו

*The Shulchan Aruch here introduces the subject of 'keviat seuda' - that even on pat haba'ah bekisnin, if a person eats enough of the cake, it takes the status of real bread and requires netilat yadayim, hamotzi and bircat hamazon. This is true even if the person regards it as a snack and not a meal. It only, however, applies to pat haba'ah bekisnin e.g. cake, pie, crackers but not to cooked mezonot dishes e.g. pasta, oatmeal. No matter how much one eats of those kinds of foods, they will never be 'pat' and will always remain mezonot<sup>2</sup>*

10. (כד) שאחרים רגילין לקבוע - כתבו האחרונים דאם אכלו לצדו לריך שיאכל שיעור שאחרים רגילים לשבוע ממנו לצדו. ואם אכלו עם צער או דברים אחרים שמלפתים זו הפת סגי כשאוכל שיעור שאחרים רגילין לשבוע ממנו כשאוכלין ג"כ עם דברים אחרים ...

משנה ברורה קסח:כד

*The amount of food that will turn pas haba'ah bekisnin into hamotzi will depend (i) If crackers are eaten alone, the amount to become hamotzi is equivalent to the amount of bread (of similar type e.g. matzot) that would be eaten alone if that was all that one had to eat. (ii) If the crackers are eaten with other food e.g. tuna, humus etc, the relevant amount which will become hamotzi is equivalent to the amount of bread which would be eaten with such other foods ('a minimal shiur')*

What is the exact amount which will be a keviat seuda? The Mishna Berura brings two opinions

11. והנה לענין עירובי תחומין צסימן שס"ה איתא דשיעור סעודה הוא ג' או ד' ביצים. וכתבו כמה אחרונים דה"ה כאן השיב צדו שיעור קביעת סעודה ...

משנה ברורה קסח:כד

The first opinion is that the shiur for keviat seuda is 3 or 4 kebeitzim (6-8 kezetim). This is equivalent to about:-

- 2 center slices of a large sliced loaf;
- just under 4 pieces of matza;
- just over three quarters of a bagel

That means that if a person ate this much in cake, it would be hamotzi i.e.

- just over 1 doughnut;
- 4 eclairs;
- 1.5 muffins
- 8 two inch wedges of pie
- around 14 large cookies
- around 50 tam tams

12. ... אבל כמה אחרונים והגר"א מכללם חולקים וס"ל דאין לצרף המוציא וצבמ"ז אלא כשיעור סעודה קבוע שהוא של ערב וצקר ...

משנה ברורה קסח:כד

*The second opinion is more lenient and is followed by most poskim. It holds that a keviat seuda is the equivalent cake to the amount of bread that one would eat in a normal evening meal if one had nothing else to eat. This is not an entirely subjective test. Rather, there will be different shiurim for different groups - children, teenagers, men, women, old people etc. For example, if a man would eat 6 slices of bread on its own for dinner, the shiur keviat seuda will be approximately three times the size referred to in the last note. This is clearly a lot of cake or crackers.*

*However, if the crackers are eaten with other foods, the amount for a keviat seuda could be much smaller - the equivalent of the amount of bread that one would eat with those other foods for a meal.*

13. ואם אכל שיעור שאחרים אין קובעים עליו, אע"פ שהוא קובע עליו, אינו מברך אלא בורא מיני מזונות וברכה אחת מעין שלש דבטלה דעתו אצל כל אדם

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*If a person ate a small amount - that people like them would never normally be satisfied with as a meal - but they individually ARE satisfied with, this does not constitute 'keviat seuda' and the beracha is mezonot*

2. Hence the minhag to eat Yerushalmi kugel for kiddush. Since it is pasta, it will never cause the problem of keviat seuda, no matter how much you eat!

14. אך אם אכלו לבדו ושבע ממנו אף שאחרים לא היו שבעין ממנו לבדו אזל כיון שאם אכלו אותו עם דברים אחרים היו שבעין ממנו, ג"כ לא אמרינן בטלה דעתו ונריך לזרך עליו המוציא ובהמ"ז ...

משנה ברורה קסח:כד

*The Mishna Berura qualifies this as follows. If the person was satisfied with a small amount of pat haba'ah bekisnin with no other food but nevertheless ate a minimal shiur - the amount which regular people would eat as bread with other food - that does constitute a 'keviat seuda' and the beracha is hamotzi*

*In practice many poskim are more lenient on this.<sup>3</sup> R' Eliezer Melamed<sup>4</sup> rules that even if one ate the pat with other food, one need only make hamotzi and bentch if one definitely ate at least 4 kebeitzim of pat together with sufficient other food that would satisfy someone of your type (eg male/female/young/old etc) as a meal.*

15. ואם מתחלה היה בדעתו לאכול ממנו מעט, וברך: בורא מיני מזונות, ואח"כ אכל שיעור שאחרים קובעים עליו, יברך עליו בהמ"ז, אע"פ שלא ברך המוציא תחלה

שולחן ערוך אורח חיים סימן קסח סעיף ו

*If a person intended to eat a small amount of cake (and therefore made a mezonot) but then changed their mind and went on to eat a large amount equal to a keviat seuda, the halacha is as follows: (i) if when they changed their mind they intended to go onto to eat a full keviat seuda on top of what they had eaten (say 6 more slices) they must now wash and make hamotzi and bentch at the end; (ii) if when they changed their mind they did not intend to eat another full keviat seuda, but they will end up in total eating more than a keviat seuda, they do not need to make hamotzi (their original mezonot still works) but they will have to bentch afterwards.*

If a person is eating pat habah bekisnin with other food (eg crackers and other food at a kiddush) most poskim advise that, in order to avoid halachic doubt in keviat seuda, a person should either eat more than 4 kebeitzim together with other food of an amount which would be a meal, make hamotzi and bentch OR eat less than 4 kebeitzim and a small amount of other food (less than a meal), and make mezonot and other berachot. Bedieved, if a person ate more than 4 kebeitzim of crackers etc (but less than a full shiur keviat seuda) and a little other food, or a small amount of crackers and a lot of other food, one should make mezonot.

**PROBLEM 4** - Even if the mezonot bread itself is technically mezonot (and this is doubtful, as set out above) people use it as a bread substitute, which makes it hamotzi, and, by definition, they eat as much of it as they would eat normal bread at a meal. As such there is a keviat seuda and the beracha must be hamotzi.

As a rule of thumb, if people call it 'bread' and usually eat it with other savoury foods, it will be hamotzi. If people call it 'cake' it is likely to be mezonot (subject to keviat seuda).

On that basis, there is a real potential halachic problem with 'mezonot bread'. Since the obligation to bentch on bread is Min HaTorah (assuming that one is full), to treat hamotzi food as 'mezonot bread' and not bentch would be a bitul assei deoraita! On the OU website (<http://www.ou.org/publications/brachot>) the official advise is:-

"However, Hamotzi is required for "Mezonot Bread" or a "Mezonot Roll" except when it is baked like a cake and is not eaten as a substitute for bread"

### ONE SLICE OF PIZZA

There is considerable halachic debate as to the beracha on one slice of pizza. Each slice of a regular pizza is around 8-9 kezaitim. As such, 2 slices will likely represent a keviat seuda and require hamotzi and bentching. 1 slice may well also be hamotzi. It all depends on whether pizza is made as a snack food or a meal food. If it is regarded as a snack food, the beracha is mezonot and it will only become hamotzi if one eats enough of it to be a keviat seuda. However if we regard pizza as a meal food, its beracha will be hamotzi, no matter how small the amount eaten. For a child or teenaged girl, one slice of pizza may well be a full shiur keviat seuda and thus hamotzi.

3. Partially also driven by the position that according to many poskim, if a person made mezonot and al hamichya on real bread, then bedieved they are yotzei

4. Pninei Halachot Berachot p.133

Some pizza is made with dough kneaded with fruit juice or milk. This itself may be pat haba'ah bekisnin type (ii) above, and thus be mezonot, although the question for Ashkenazim will be whether the dough is really sweet. It will still become hamotzi if a shiur keviat seuda is eaten.

The advice given by many poskim is that mezonot can be made on one slice of pizza IF (i) the person is eating it as a snack AND (ii) is not filled by it AND (iii) it is smaller than a shiur keviat seuda.

The OU psak<sup>5</sup> on Pizza is:-

**Pizza (Meal)** Hamotzi & Birkat Hamazon. It is Pat Haba'ah B'kisnin. If two slices are eaten without other foods this would constitute a Keviat Seudah for an obligation of Birkat Hamazon. If pizza is eaten with other foods, such as french fries and salad, whatever amount of bread a person would usually eat at a similar meal with other foods would constitute Keviat Seudah of pizza even if less than two slices are eaten.

**Pizza (Snack)** Mezonot Al Hamichya

## WRAPS

Wraps made from 5 grains<sup>6</sup> are designed as a meal food. The OU psak on wraps is:

**Hamotzi & Birkat Hamazon:** If one were to eat a plain wrap (unfilled) then it would be mezonos. Because it is not the way people eat this, this is a chisaron in the tzuras hapas. But if one were to eat a filled wrap with tuna or cheese etc, then the proper beracha would be hamotzi.

5. <https://oukosher.org/guide-to-blessings/>

6. Tortillas are normally made from maize and thus will be shehakol