YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

**THE LAWS OF THE *BERAKHOT***

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This week’s *shiurim* are dedicated in memory of Rhona Albert *z”l*by Jose and Fay Poliak

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**Shiur #22: *Birkat Ha-Motzi***

***Kevi’at Se’uda***

***Pat Ha-Ba’ah Be-Kisanin* (3)**

**Rav David Brofsky**

**Introduction**

Last week, we learned that the Talmud (*Berakhot* 42a) rules that when *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* is eaten as the basis of a meal, one recites *Ha-Motzi* before and *Birkat Ha-Mazon* after eating. We discussed two questions relevant to this law.

First, we asked WHY *kevi’at se’uda* changes the blessing from *Borei Minei Mezonot to Ha-Motzi*. We noted that the some *Rishonim* (see, for example, Ra’ah, *Berakhot* 39a) explain that when one bases his meal on *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin*, it acquires the status of bread and is therefore worthy of the blessings of *Ha-Motzi* and *Birkat Ha-Mazon*. Others (see Rambam, *Hilkhot Berakhot* 3:9) imply that although *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* is considered to be “bread,” its blessing is a function of the manner in which it is eaten. When eaten as a snack, one recites *Borei Minei Mezonot*; however, when it is used as the basis of one’s meal (*kav’a se’udata aleha*), one says *Ha-Motzi*. We suggested that the *Rishonim* disagree as to whether the blessings of *Ha-Motzi* and *Birkat Ha-Mazon* are said over bread, and *kevi’at se’uda* is therefore essential in defining *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* as “bread,” or over a meal, in which case they are the proper blessings as long as one makes the *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* the basis of his meal.

Second, we asked when one is considered to have made the *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* the basis of his meal. We learned that the Ra’avad (cited by Rosh, *Berakhot* 6:30) maintains that one’s personal, subjective intention determines whether or not he says *Ha-Motzi* before eating *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin*. Rabbeinu Moshe (ibid.) disagrees and accepts an objective definition of *kevi’at se’uda* – that which others make the basis of their meal. Interestingly, R. Menachem Ha-Meiri accepts both views and rules that if one makes *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* the basis of his meal, and even if he does not but eats an amount that others would eat as a meal, he must wash, say the *birkat Ha-Motzi*, and afterwards recite *Birkat Ha-Mazon*.

The Shulchan Arukh (168:6) rules in accordance with Rabbeinu Moshe: “One says *Borei Minei Mezonot* [before eating] *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* and the *berakha mei-ein shalosh* (i.e. *Al Ha-Michya*) afterwards. And if he eats an amount which others make the basis of their meal (*she-acherim* *regilim likvo’a alav*), even though he is not satiated from it, he recites the blessings *of Ha-Motzi* and *Birkat Ha-Mazon*.”

 This week, we will attempt to define “an amount which others make the basis of their meal (*she-acherim* *regilim likvo’a alav*).”

**Definition of *Kevi’at Se’uda* – Objective *Shiur***

Some *Acharonim* suggest an objective definition for the “*shiur* *she-acherim* *regilim likvo’a alav,*” the amount which others make the basis of their meal. They look towards other areas of halakha in search of an objective definition of a “meal.”

R. Shmuel Ha-Levi Loew (Kelin) (1720–1806), in his super-commentary on the Magen Avraham, the Machatzit Ha-Shekel (168:13), cites the Kapot Temarim, who derives the definition of “meal” from the laws of *eiruv chatzeirot* and *eiruv techumin*. In those contexts, the *eiruv* must consist of the amount of food sufficient for two “minimal” Shabbat meals, which is equivalent to the size of 6 (Rashi) - 8 eggs (Rambam). Therefore, a standard meal is defined as an amount equivalent to 3–4 eggs. R. Eliyahu b. R. Binyamin Wolf Shapiro (1660 – 1712), in his Eliya Rabba (168:17), also cites this view in the name of the Ohr Chadash. The question of whether these *shiurim* are measured by volume or weight is subject to debate, but according to most authorities, these are measurements of volume. Therefore, according to this view, one must wash and say *Ha-Motzi* before eating *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* equivalent to the volume of 3-4 eggs. Since a large egg is approximately 2 oz., this equals ¾ -1 cup.

Others suggest a much larger amount. The Torah relates that in the desert, every Jew was given a portion of *mann* sufficient for two meals, an “*omer le-gulgolet*” (*Shemot* 16:16). The Talmud (*Eiruvin* 82b) describes this amount as “healthy and blessed” and rules that this is also the amount from which one must separate *challah*. Rashi (*Pesachim* 48b) explains that an “*omer*” is the equivalent of 43 and 1/5 eggs. Accordingly, the amount sufficient for one meal was slightly more that the equivalent of 21.5 eggs. This quantity is proposed by some *Acharonim*, including R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1745 - 1812) in his *siddur* (*Seder Birkot Ha-Nehenin*) and in his Shulchan Arukh Ha-Rav (168:9). This is a particularly large amount – the equivalent volume of a bit more than five cups.

The Arukh Ha-Shulchan (168:16) rejects the first view, claiming that the amount equivalent to four eggs clearly does not satiate, and he is therefore inclined to accept the view of the Shulchan Arukh Ha-Rav. Interestingly, R. Moshe Feinstein (Iggerot Moshe, OC 3:32) insists that we cannot accept the latter view, as people do not generally eat the equivalent of 21.5 eggs for a meal!

Some *Acharonim* (see, for example, Mishna Berura 168:24) warn that one should not eat more than the equivalent of 3-4 eggs of *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* in order not to enter a situation of halakhic doubt, and it is indeed reported that some pious individuals did so. Most *Acharonim*, however, accept a different definition of “*shiur* *she-acherim* *regilim likvo’a alav*.”

**Subjective *Shiur* – *Kol She-Acherim Kove’im Alav Se’uda***

The Beit Yosef (168) cites the Sefer Ha-Agur (217), who cites the Shibbolei Ha-Leket (159), who explains that “*kava se’udato alayhu*” (making it the basis of his meal) refers to the “*se’udat shacharit ve-arvit ve-lo se’udat arai*” (the morning and evening meals, and not a snack). The Beit Yosef disagrees and insists that it does not matter whether one is eating the morning or evening meal, but rather whether one eats the amount a person would ordinarily eat for a meal, that determines “*kevi’ut*.”

Seemingly, while the Agur and Shibbolei Ha-Leket explain that the Talmud refers to the meal which one eats, according to the Beit Yosef, the *gemara* refers to the quantity of *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* that others would eat for a main meal (*se’udat shacharit ve-arvit*). It seems that nowadays, according to this view, a main meal should be measured in relation to dinner in America, and possibly lunch in Israel, but not breakfast (see Hittorerut Teshuva 1:80). This view is recorded in the Shulchan Arukh.

As mentioned above, although some Acharonim insist that one should be careful not to eat the equivalent of 3–4 eggs of *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin*, most *Acharonim* (see Gra, as cited by Nishmat Adam [Chayyei Adam 54:4], Mishna Berura 168:24, and Iggerot Moshe, OC 3:32) rule in accordance with this approach, and only require washing when one eats a quantity of *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* equivalent to the bread eaten at a large meal.

 Does it matter if one eats the *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* with other foods? The Magen Avraham (168:13) writes:

It seems to me that if he makes [*pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin*] the basis of his meal, even though he ate meat and others foods with it, and had he eaten [the *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin*] alone he would not have been satiated from it, even so he says *Ha-Motzi* and *Birkat Ha-Mazon* afterwards.

Although some *Acharonim*, including the Arukh Ha-Shulchan (168:17), as well as many Sephardic Acharonim, reject this view, the Mishna Berura (168:24) and Iggerot Moshe (OC 3:32) rule accordingly.

 Regarding this issue, R. Moshe Feinstein (Iggerot Moshe OC 3:32), after ruling that one should preferably be stringent and not eat the equivalent volume of 4 eggs, writes:

Since in this country, by the grace of God, people are accustomed to eating many foods at each meal, and they therefore minimize the amount of bread they eat… it would seem that in this country it is a smaller amount for many people, less than the equivalent to the volume of 3 eggs. Therefore one should be careful at a wedding, when he doesn’t wish to wash one’s hands and eat bread in order not to have to wait until the end of the meal for the *zimun* … not to eat kinds of cakes, with the “title of bread”, as occasionally even a bit of bread is, according to the Magen Avraham, *kevi’at seu’da* … and one should eat less than the amount of cakes that one is accustomed to eat of break at a meal.

 According to this rational, it would seem that one who eats bourekas as the center of one’s meal, accompanied by other foods, such as a soup, salad, an egg, etc. may possibly be obligated to wash and say *Ha-Motzi*. In such a case, one should probably wash and say *Ha-Motzi* upon a piece of bread in order to remove himself from the doubt.

If the definition of *kevi’at se’uda* is dependent upon the behavior of others, is it possible to broaden this criterion and to suggest that *kevi’at se’uda* is not only determined by the quantity eaten by others at a main meal, but also by the manner in which the meal is eaten?

A number of *Acharonim* criticize the practice of eaten large amount at wedding buffets without eating bread. The Arukh Ha-Shulchan (168:18), for example, writes:

And you should know, and many great scholars were outraged at the current widespread custom of putting out, before a festive event, a table with different kinds of fish and meat which are eaten with *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin*, and eating without washing one’s hands (*netilat yadayim*) and without [saying] *Ha-Motzi* and *Birkat Ha-Mazon*… There is no doubt that they must wash their hands and [say] *Ha-Motzi* and *Birkat Ha-Mazon*, as even if they are careful not to each much of the *pat* [*ha-ba’ah be-kisanin*], according to the scholars mentioned in the previous section, if they are satisfied from the food served with the bread, they must wash… even when eating only a bit of *pat* [*ha-ba’ah be-kisanin*], and certainly people eat the equivalent of four eggs… But it is not in our hands to protest.

However, the Arukh Ha-Shulchan attempts to justify this practice:

And in order to somewhat justify this practice, it seems in my opinion from the language of the Rif… that it is not dependent upon the quantity of the *kevi’at se’uda*, but rather the manner in which it is eaten… As it is known that at a full meal, people take off their outer coats and sit around a table, but at these events, they grab food and eat without preparation and some eat while standing…

Although this explanation seems compelling, the Arukh Ha-Shulchan writes that “all who are God fearing should avoid this… and he who is Merciful should forgive...”

 Other *Acharonim* employ a similar argument to justify eating large amounts of food with crackers at the weekly Shabbat *kiddush*. R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (see Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilkhata, chapter 54, footnote 65), for example, describes eating at a *kiddush* as “*arai*” (temporary). Similarly, R. Shimon Sofer (1850 – 1944), grandson of the Chatam Sofer suggests in his Hitorerut Ha-Teshuva (80) that “if one is not making the food the basis of his meal, and this is not his sustenance, and he eats temporarily (*arai*), then even if he ate the amount generally eaten as a meal, the equivalent of 3-4 eggs, he does not say the *Birkat Ha-Motzi* and *Birkat Ha-Mazon*.” He even suggests that food which is never eaten as a meal, like cake, can never become the basis of one’s meal; one never washes and recites *Ha-Motzi* before eating cake.

Although this is not the commonly held view, it is certainly intriguing, and also justifies the widespread practice not to wash when eating large quantities of *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* not in the context of a meal.

**Objective *Kevi’ut Se’uda* – “*Pashtida*”**

The Talmud, as discussed above, rules that when one makes *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* the basis of his meal, he must say the *birkat Ha-Motzi* and *Birkat Ha-Mazon*; otherwise, *Borei Minei Mezonot* is recited. What about a type of *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* upon which most people treat like bread, making it the center of their meal?

 The Shulchan Arukh (168:17) rules that “[on a] *pashtida*, which is baked in an oven with meat, fish or cheese, one says *Ha-Motzi* and *Birkat Ha-Mazon*.” This ruling is first found in the Shiltei Gibborim (*Berakhot* 30a) and the Sefer Ha-Agur (216) in the name of R. Yishayahu Di Trani (13th century Italy).

The *Acharonim* debate the meaning and scope of this ruling. The Taz (168:20) insists that the Shulchan Arukh refers to a case in which one makes this *pashtida* the basis of his meal. If one does not eat it as a meal, one says *Borei Minei Mezonot*. The Magen Avraham (168:44; see also Shelah and Emek Berakha cited by Eliya Rabba 168:33), however, disagrees, and explains that a *pashtida* is no longer considered to be *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin*. Rather, since it is generally eaten as the basis of a meal, it is considered to be bread and one always recites *Ha-Motzi* before eating it. Although some rule like the Taz (Kitzur Shulchan Arukh 48:2), most *Acharonim* (see Shulchan Arukh Ha-Rav 168:10 and Mishna Berura 168:10, for example) rule in accordance with the Magen Avraham.

This position is consistent with the position of those *Acharonim* who maintain that the three descriptions of *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* found in the Shulchan Arukh should be viewed as examples and not models. In other words, the line between foods upon which one recites *Ha-Motzi* and those upon which one says *Borei Minei Mezonot* is based upon how they are eaten, and not just their ingredients.

 The Birkei Yosef (268:17) explains that if the dough of this *pashtida* is made with oil, it is considered to be *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin*, in which case one would only wash and say *Ha-Motzi* if it is eaten as the basis of one’s meal. Others disagree and claim that it the type of dough from which the *pashtida* is made is not crucial; rather one must determine whether it is generally eaten as a meal or a snack.

If so, this ruling may have great impact upon the practical applications of *kevi’at se’uda*. Not only would it seem to exclude the possibility of reciting *Borei Minei Mezonot* on egg *challa* and “*mezonot* rolls,” it may also impact upon the proper blessing for pizza, large meat bourekas, and even deli roll. We will return to these examples in a couple of weeks.

 Next week, we will discuss grain based foods upon which one always recites the blessing of *Borei Minei Mezonot*. Afterwards, God willing, we will use the principles and precedents which we have learned and apply them to numerous commonly consumed foods.