**YESHIVAT HAR ETZION**

**ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)**

**THE LAWS OF THE BERAKHOT**

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**Shiur #24: *Birkat Ha-Motzi***

***Birkat Ha-Motzi* and *Mezonot (*2)**

**Introduction**

After dedicating our first few *shiurim* to defining *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin,* upon which one recites the blessing of *Borei Minei Mezonot* unless it is eaten as the basis of one’s meal, last week we discussed two other types of foods: *teronin* and *tarita*.

The Shulchan Arukh (168:15) distinguishes between bread and a *teroknin*, describing how “when one makes a hole in which one puts flour and water, mixes and bakes it, one says *Borei Minei Mezonot* … and if he makes it the basis of his meal, he says *Ha-Motzi* and *Birkat Ha-Mazon*.” The Shulchan Arukh implies that the difference between *troknin* and bread lies in the process, and not the appearance of the bread (*tzurat ha-pat).* Regarding the *tarita*, the Shulchan Arukh (168:15-16) cites three examples, including “[when] one takes flour and water and mixes them and pours it onto a stove and it spreads out and is baked, [it] does not have *torat lechem* at all, and one recites upon it only *Borei Minei Mezonot* and *mei-ein shalosh* (*Al Ha-Michya*), even if one makes it the basis of his meal.” A *tarita* does not even have any *torat lechem*. Therefore, the appropriate blessing is *Borei Minei Mezonot* and one never says *Ha-Motzi* and *Birkat Ha-Mazon* for a *tarita*, even if eaten as the basis of his meal.

We suggested that cakes made from very loose batter most likely fit into the category of *troknin*. Therefore, according to all opinions, one must say a blessing before eating cake in the middle of a meal when it is not eaten as part of the meal. In addition, some suggest that blintzes, thin pancakes, and even wafers fit into the category of *tarita*. Therefore, not only must one say a blessing before eating them during a meal, even if they are eaten as the basis of one’s meal, one does not say the *birkat Ha-Motzi* and *Birkat Ha-Mazon*.

This week, we will discuss two more scenarios in which one recites the blessing *Borei Minei Mezonot*, even if one makes the food the basis of his meal.

**Boiled or Deep-Fried Dough**

As we saw last week, the definition of bread is relevant for numerous halakhic questions, including the definitions of *chametz* and *matza*, obligation to separate *challa*, and the blessing of *Ha-Motzi*. Regarding bread that is not baked in an oven, the *mishna* (*Challa* 1:4) teaches:

Sponge-biscuits (*sufganin*), honey-cakes (*duvshanin*), dumplings (*askritim*) … are exempt from *challa*.

Although the *mishna* does not explain why these foods are exempt from *challa*, the Talmud (*Pesachim* 37a) assumes that they are not subject to *challa* due to the manner in which they are baked. Reish Lakish maintains that these foods are prepared in a pot (*ma’aseh ilfas*), and not in an oven. R. Yochanan insists that regardless of how they are baked, breads are subject to the obligation of *challa*; these breads, however, were baked in the sun and are therefore exempt. The *Rishonim* note, based on the Yerushalmi (*Challa*, ch. 1), that even R. Yochanan agrees that if the dough was boiled (*al yedei mashkeh*) that the bread is exempt from *challa*.

Most *Rishonim* (Rif, *Pesachim* 11b; Rambam, *Hilkhot Bikkurim* 6:12; Rosh, *Pesachim* 2:15, et al.) rule in accordance with R. Yochanan. Thus, dough is only exempt from the obligation of separating *challa* if it is either baked in the sun or boiled. However, bread baked without liquid, whether in an oven or in a pot, is subject to the obligation of *challa*. The *Rishonim* add that the appropriate blessing over boiled dough is accordingly *Borei Minei Mezonot*.

Rabbeinu Tam disagrees. He bases his opinion upon another *mishna* in *Masekhet Challa* (1:5), which teaches:

Dough which was originally [intended for] sponge-biscuits (*sufganin*) and finally [cooked as] sponge-biscuits is exempt from *challah*. [If it was] originally [ordinary] dough (*issa*), but finally [cooked as] sponge-biscuits, [or if it was] originally [intended for] sponge biscuits, but finally [cooked as ordinary] dough, it is subject to *challa*.

Most *Rishonim* (Rambam, *Hilkhot* *Bikkurim* 6:13; Rash, *Challa* 1:5; Ramban, *Hilkhot Challa* 26b; Rosh, *Pesachim* 2:16) understand that the *mishna* refers to two types of bread, that which is boiled or bakes in the sun (*sufganin*) and that which is baked in a pot or an oven (*issa*). Furthermore, the *mishna* refers to two critical times: *techilata* and *sofa* (beginning and end). The “beginning” refers to kneading, while the “end” refers to the baking. Accordingly, if one had in mind, either during the kneading or the baking, to bake bread in a normal manner, then one is obligated to separate *challa*. Otherwise, the dough is exempt.

Rabbeinu Tam (Tosafot, *Pesachim* 37b, s.v. *de-khulei*) understands differently. He explains that the *mishna* contrasts a *sufganin*, a liquidy dough (*belila raka*), to a thick dough (*belila ava*). The *mishna* teaches that both a *belila raka* which was baked in an oven and an *issa* which was baked in the sun or boiled are subject to the laws of *challa*. Furthermore, he claims that the debate between Reish Lakish and R. Yochanan refers only to a *belila raka*; an *issa* which is boiled is certainly obligated in *challa*!

Therefore, according to Rabbeinu Tam, one must separate *challa* from both baked and boiled dough. How are we to understand this position, and how does this discussion impact upon the proper blessing to be recited before eating boiled or deep-fried dough? Rabbeinu Tam himself grapples with the implications of this position, as Tosafot (*Berakhot* 37b, s.v. *lechem*) records:

Initially, Rabbeinu Tam wished to say that they are only subject to the laws of *challa*, as the *mitzva* of *challa* begins while it is still dough (*issa*), as it says, “*arisoteichem*" (*Bamidbar* 15:21), and since it began as dough, it is subject to *challa*, but one does not recite *Ha-Motzi*, but that does not seem to be the case.

At first, Rabbeinu Tam suggests that while baked dough is certainly considered to be bread, when it is boiled, the laws of *challa* dictate that one must separate *challa* despite that fact that the food is not defined as “bread.” He concludes, however, that the proper blessing for dough which is boiled is *Ha-Motzi*; apparently, even after being boiled, it is still considered to be “bread.”

Rabbeinu Tam adds that although pasta is subject to *challa*, as it is made from a thick dough (*issa*), one does not recite *Ha-Motzi* over pasta, as “they do not have a *turita se-nehama* (the appearance of bread).”

Regarding the obligation of *challa*, the Shulchan Arukh (YD 329:3) rules in accordance with the majority of *Rishonim*, including the Rash, and does not mention the view of Rabbeinu Tam. However, regarding the proper blessing to be recited before eating, the Shulchan Arukh (168:13) cites both opinions, concluding: “A God fearing [person] should only eat [dough which has been boiled] after first reciting the blessing [of *Ha-Motzi*] over bread.” The Rema adds that one always says the blessing *Borei Minei Mezonot* before eating pasta, as it does not have “an appearance of bread” (*to’ar lechem*). In contrast, “*pashtida* and *kreplach*” **do** have a *to’ar lechem*, and therefore those who are concerned with the view of Rabbeinu Tam should only eat them during a meal.

The Rema comments that “it is customary to be lenient” (*nahagu le-hakel*). It is therefore customary to say *Borei Minei Mezonot* before eating boiled or deep-fried breads, such as doughnuts and *sufganiot*.

The *Acharonim* debate whether, according to the lenient opinion, one who eats boiled dough as the basis of his meal (*kevi’at se’uda*) must wash, say *Ha-Motzi*, and then *Birkat Ha-Mazon* after eating, like one who is *kove’a se’uda* on *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin*. While some *Acharonim* (Ginat Veradim, OC 1:24; Perach Shushan 1:4) maintain that one must say *Ha-Motzi*, others (Magen Avraham 168:38; Mishna Berura 168:57) insist that one always says *Borei* *Minei* *Mezonot* over boiled or deep-fried dough.

Interestingly, R. Ovadia Yosef (Yechave Da’at 5:53) discusses whether *sufganiot* are subject to the laws of *bishul Akum*. *Bishul Akum* refers to the rabbinic prohibition under certain circumstances to eat food cooked by non-Jews (see Shulchan Arukh, YD 113). This question is especially relevant to Sephardim, who generally demand that a Jew participate in the actual cooking of the food, and not just in lighting the fire (ibid. 113:7). R. Yosef suggests that since the *Rishonim* debate whether or not a boiled or fried dough is considered to be “*lechem*," regarding the rabbinic prohibition of *bishul Akum*, one may be lenient and treat them as bread, which is not subject to the concern (see Rema 113:11). In addition, some suggest that *sufganiot* may not be considered to be “*oleh al shulchan melakhim*” (fit to be served to a king), and therefore the laws of *bishul Akum* do not apply. The policy of the Israeli Chief Rabbinate, however, is to insist that the deep-fryer is turned on by a Jew.

**Dough Which is Boiled and Then Baked**

What if dough is first boiled or deep-fried and then baked? The Talmud relates to this question in two places. One passage (*Yevamot* 40a) teaches:

In respect of what practical issue, then, has it been stated that a dumpling may be regarded as unleavened bread? [The statement was made] to indicate that a man fulfills his obligation [to eat *matza*] on Pesach. Although he made it first into a dumpling, it is nevertheless designated as the “bread of affliction” (*lechem oni*), since he subsequently baked it in an oven. Consequently, a man may fulfill his obligation [with this dough] on Pesach.

This passage implies that even if dough is boiled, if it is then baked in an oven, it is considered to be bread and it may be used to fulfill the *mitzva* of the first night.

However, another passage (*Pesachim* 37b) relates:

They differ here where he re-baked it in an oven. The first *Tanna* holds [that] since he re-baked it in an oven, it is called “bread,” while R. Yehuda holds that bread is only considered to be bread when it is baked in an oven from the very beginning, and since this was not baked in an oven from the very beginning, we do not call it “bread.”

Here, the Tanna Kama and R. Yehuda differ as to whether bread that is first boiled and then baked in the oven is considered to be bread.

The Ramban (Milchamot Ha-Shem, *Pesachim* 11a) explains that when the dough is not edible after being boiled, then the baking is considered to be significant and the appropriate blessing is *Ha-Motzi*. However, the Tanna Kama and R. Yehuda debate whether dough that is already edible after being boiled is already considered to be bread and is therefore obligated in *challa*.

Therefore, according to the Ramban, one says *Ha-Motzi* over dough which is significantly boiled and then baked, and possibly over dough which has been partially boiled and then baked. Tosafot, on the other hand, maintain that all agree that one says *Ha-Motzi* over dough which is boiled or fried that is then baked.

The Shulchan Arukh (168:14) writes:

Dough which is boiled in water and afterwards baked in an oven is considered to be bread and one say upon [eating it] *Ha-Motzi*.

Accordingly, one says *Ha-Motzi* before eating boiled or fried dough that is then baked. American bagels are often boiled and then baked, and therefore one should say *Ha-Motzi* before and *Birkat Ha-Mazon* after eating them.

Next week, we will discuss whether bread can lose its status as bread, and we will relate to the proper blessings for breadcrumbs, *matzabrei*, French toast, and *kneidlach*.