**YESHIVAT HAR ETZION**

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

**THE LAWS OF THE BERAKHOT**

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**Shiur #37: Blessings Recited On Food Eaten During the Meal**

**Introduction**

The Talmud (*Berakhot* 41b) teaches:

It has been stated: If figs and grapes were set before them in the course of the meal, R. Huna says that they require a blessing before but they do not require a blessing after, and so said R. Nachman: They require a blessing before but they do not require a blessing after. R. Sheshet, however, said: They require a blessing both before and after, since there is nothing requiring a blessing before which does not also require a blessing after, save bread taken with the sweets. This is at variance with R. Chiyya, for R. Chiyya said: [A blessing said over] bread suffices for all kinds of food [taken in the meal], and a blessing said over wine for all kinds of drink.

R. Papa said: The law is (*hilkhata*) that things that form an integral part of the meal (*devarim ha-ba’im machamat ha-se’uda*) when taken in the course of the meal require no blessing either before or after; things which do not form an integral part of the meal when taken in the course of the meal require a blessing before but not after; and when taken after the meal *(le-achar ha-se’uda*), they require a blessing both before and after.

The *gemara* concludes that there are two *halakhot*:

1) Foods that are eaten “*machmat ha-se’uda*” and during the meal do not require a blessing, while those eaten “*she-lo machamat ha-se’uda*” require a blessing.

2) Foods eaten “*le-achar ha-se’uda*” (“after the meal”) require a blessing.

The *Rishonim* and *Poskim* disagree regarding the definition and application of these principles.

This week, we will discuss foods that are considered to be “*machmat ha-se’uda*” and therefore do not require a separate blessing.

***Devarim Ha-Ba’im Machmat Ha-Se’uda***

Some *Rishonim* (Behag, *Hilkhot Berakhot*, chapter 6; Rashi, *Berakhot* 41a-b) explain that “*devarim ha-ba’im machmat ha-se’uda*” – i.e. those foods which are inherently part of the meal and are therefore covered the blessing of *Ha-Motzi* – include foods eaten **with** bread, such as meat and fish. Other foods, even those which are generally served with the meal, such as porridge, cabbage, and beets, require a separate blessing. These *Rishonim* explain that meat and fish are considered to be “*tafel*” to the bread and therefore do not require a separate blessing.

The Ri (Tosafot, *Berakhot* 41b, s.v. *hilkhata*) questions why this passage is any different from one we have already studied (*Berakhot* 44a): “Whenever with one kind of food another is taken as subsidiary (*tafel*), a blessing is said over the principal kind (*ikkar*) and this serves for the subsidiary (*tafel*).” The Ri therefore explains that “*devarim ha-ba’im machmat ha-se’uda*” refers to all foods that are generally eaten with bread as the main part of the meal.

Although Rashi clearly maintains that meat and fish do not require another blessing because they are “*tafel*” to the bread, it is not clear whether the Ri simply expands the definition of “*tafel*” to include other foods eaten as part of the meal, or whether he fundamentally views the blessing of *Ha-Motzi* as a blessing recited over the meal, and not just the bread. All agree, however, that *Birkat Ha-Mazon* is said over the entire meal, and a separate *berakha acharona* is therefore not said.

The Magen Avraham (177:1) raises a possible practical difference. He argues that if one washed but has no intention of eating bread, the blessing of *Ha-Motzi* should not cover the other foods, as the other foods are clearly not eaten as “*tafel*” to the bread. This question assumes that only foods that are considered to be “*tafel*” to the bread are exempt through the blessing of *Ha-Motzi*. The Arukh Ha-Shulchan (177) disagrees and argues that the blessing of *Ha-Motzi* is recited over the **meal**. Therefore, even if one does not intend to eat bread, other “meal foods” are included in the blessing of *Ha-Motzi Lechem Min Ha-Aretz*.

**Fruit During the Meal**

The *Rishonim* assume that fundamentally, fruits are considered to be foods that are not eaten “*machmat ha-se’uda*.” They are not an integral part of the meal, but are rather generally a dessert food, upon which one should say a blessing. However, there are situations in which the *Rishonim* suggest that the blessing of *Ha-Motzi* may cover fruit as well.

For example, what should one do if he washes his hands and eats bread, with the intention of eating fruit as a main course of the meal, even if it is eaten without bread? The Rosh (*Berakhot* 6:28) rules that since the fruits are consider to be part of the “*ikkar se’uda*,” the main part of the meal, there is no need for an additional blessing. Rabbeinu Yona (Talmidei Rabbeinu Yona, *Berakhot* 29a, s.v. *amar she-lo*) disagrees (based upon his understanding of Rashi’s opinion), and rules that if one began eating a meal of fruit without bread – that is, not eating bread with the fruit – the blessing of *Ha-Motzi* does NOT cover the fruit even when eaten as the main course.

In addition, the *Rishonim* discuss whether one is still exempt if he began eating fruit with bread, and was therefore exempt from the blessing over the fruit due to the laws of *ikkar* and *tafel*, and then afterwards ate fruit alone. The Rosh (ibid.) as well as the Tur (177) maintain that once one is exempt from the blessing in the beginning of the meal, he need not say the blessing over this fruit throughout the meal. Rabbeinu Yona (Talmidei Rabbeinu Yona, *Berakhot* 29b) disagrees and maintains that in this case, only when the fruit is eaten with the bread is he exempt from saying the blessing.

Interestingly, the *Rishonim* even debate whether one needs to recite a blessing before drinking water during the meal. Tosafot (*Berakhot* 41b, *i hakhi*) and others write that drinking is an integral part of the meal and therefore no additional blessing is recited. The Behag (see Rosh, *Berakhot* 6:29) and Machzor Vitri (see Tosafot, ibid.) disagree and insist that one should say a blessing before drinking even during the meal. Although the Rosh rules in accordance with Tosafot, he suggests saying a blessing over a drink before *netilat yadayim* and *Ha-Motzi*, with the intent that it should cover drinking during the meal as well. The Rema (174:7) records that it is customary not to say a blessing before drinking before or during the meal. (Next week, we will discuss drinking wine before and during the meal.)

**The Halakha**

The Shulchan Arukh (177:1-2) addresses all of these questions. Regarding the debate between Rashi and the Ri (Tosafot), the Shulchan Arukh rules in accordance with the Ri. Therefore, food which is eaten as part of the main course, even if not eaten with the bread, is exempt from the blessing, as the blessing of *Ha-Motzi* was established to be said before eating the “meal” – i.e. the foods which make up the meal – and not necessarily just the bread. Regarding the case of one who eats fruit with bread and then separately, the Shulchan Arukh rules in accordance with Rabbeinu Yona, who argues that a *berakha* is not recited. Finally, regarding one who is “*kove’a se’uda*” over fruit and does not intend to eat them with bread, the Shulchan Arukh cites both views and concludes that “it is proper to eat first from the fruit with bread, and therefore even if afterwards he eats fruit without bread, they do not require a blessing.” The Rema adds that even if he doesn’t eat bread with the fruit later in the meal, since he began eating fruit with bread, the blessing of *Ha-Motzi* suffices.

Therefore, if one eats fruits for their taste, and not necessarily in order to be satiated (such as grapes, watermelon, fruit, dates and figs), he must say a blessing before eating, even during the meal. Similarly, if one eats ice cream for dessert, one should say the blessing of *She-Hakol*. One should say a blessing before eating melon or grapefruit at the beginning of a meal, as this is not an integral part of the meal. However, fruits that are eaten as part of the main meal, such as fruits cooked with meat, salads (including carrot, lettuce, and even Waldorf salad) do not require a separate blessing, nor does tzimmes or raisins found in rice.

One should also say the blessing of *Borei Minei Mezonot* before eating cakes and crackers for dessert. As we learned previously, the *Rishonim* offer numerous definitions of *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin*, which would seemingly be covered by the *Ha-Motzi* blessing. Some *Acharonim* maintain that since there is a doubt as the definition of *pat* *ha*-*ba’ah* *be*-*kisanin* and most baked products could be viewed as a “*safek Ha-Motzi*,” one should therefore not say *Ha-Motzi* over these products. It seems, however, that soft cakes, waffles, and pancakes, as well as boiled or fried doughs, require the blessing of *Ha-Motzi*. Some *Acharonim* suggest that when one is in doubt, he should have these desserts in mind when saying *Ha-Motzi* (Chayye Adam 43:9).

Next week, we will discuss other foods that may or may not require a blessing before, and even after, the meal.