



Hamotzi and Birkat Hamazon on Mezonot Foods

לעילוי נשמת
 יואל אפרים בן אברהם עוזיאל זלצמן ז"ל

Question: I understand that if one eats a sufficient amount of food whose *beracha* is *Mezonot* (=mezonot), he recites *Hamotzi* and *Birkat Hamazon* (=BHM) on it. Do bread and *mezonot* combine to comprise the required amount when each separately lacks a *shiur*? How about different types of *mezonot*, e.g., cake and oatmeal?

Answer: The *gemara* (Berachot 42a) says that for *pat haba'ah b'kisnin* (=phbbk), food that shares qualities with bread but is not normal bread, whether one recites *Hamotzi* or *Mezonot* on it depends on whether one is *koveia seuda* (sets a meal) on it. When *phbbk* gets *Hamotzi*, one also recites *BHM* on it (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 168:6) and washes on it (ibid. 158:1).

To be a candidate for bread status, food must be made from “the five grains” and be baked or look like bread. (Spaghetti is not *phbbk* or treated like bread no matter how much of it one eats – see ibid. 168:10). Various characteristics determine whether foods that pass these tests are bread or *phbbk* (ibid. 7).

A *k'zayit* of bread suffices to require *BHM*, (ibid. 9), but if one eats less, *phbbk* cannot take it over that threshold, because objects

with different *shiurim* do not join together to reach the *shiur* (see Shabbat 76a). However, if one was slightly short of the *shiur* needed for *phbbk*, the bread, with its smaller *shiur*, can complete the bigger *shiur* needed for *phbbk* (ibid.). Different types of bread combine for a *k'zayit* and types of *phbbk* combine for *kevi'at seuda*. (Arguably, elevating *phbbk* to bread status must focus on one food, but I have not found sufficient basis for this in the sources.)

The Magen Avraham (=MA) went much further in combining things, claiming that it is enough that the meal with *phbbk* is a real meal. He writes: “If he set his meal on [*phbbk*], even though he ate with it meat and other things and if he had eaten [that amount he had of] it by itself he would not have been satiated from it, he still recites *Hamotzi* and *BHM*.” His approach emanates from the *gemara* (ibid.) and *Rishonim* who describe eating of these semi-breads as that which is done at a normal meal. After all, a normal meal includes foods other than bread. So while no amount of cooked or fried grain-based food could get *Hamotzi*, oatmeal that you mentioned and many other things one has as part of a meal with, say, a *boreka*, can, according to the MA, change the *boreka's beracha* to *Hamotzi*.

I must warn you, though, that it is very difficult to apply the matter of being *koveia seuda* on *phbbk*. First, there is a *machloket* whether the amount of *kevi'at seuda* to eat depends on the individual's satiation or how much most people eat (see opinions in Rosh, Berachot 6:30). Another regarded approach sets the amount at the size (weight/volume?) of three or four eggs. This is a cutoff point regarding certain *halachot* of serious eating, even though it does not satiate most people (see Mishna Berura 168:24).

There is also a *machloket* whether we accept the MA to include other foods eaten at the meal to reach *kevi'at seuda* – the Mishna Berura (*ibid.*) accepts him; the Birkei Yosef (OC 168:6) and Aruch Hashulchan (OC 168:17) disagree. There are also several permutations and opinions about how broadly to apply the MA. Is it only for foods that are eaten with the *mezonot*, e.g., crackers and cheese, a sandwich on a “*mezonot* roll” (see discussions in V'zot Haberacha 4:3; Netivot Haberacha 57)? Is it only when the *mezonot* and other

foods are eaten at the same time (Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata 54:(132) in the name of Rav Auerbach)? Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igrot Moshe, OC II, 32) has an expansive approach. While the MA assumes the *phbbk* must play a major part of the meal, Rav Moshe reasons that today's trend to eat less bread at meals than was once standard lowers the amount of *phbbk* needed as well.

Many *poskim* assume there is a difference between *l'chatchila* and *b'di'eved*, i.e., avoid meals with significant *phbbk* and no bread due to the huge gray area. Nevertheless, common practice is to eat non-bread meals without *Hamotzi/BHM* (see Avnei Yashfeh II, OC 20; Teshuvot V'hanhagot I:182). ■

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