



# How Many *K'zeitim* and Why?

לעילוי נשמת  
 יואל אפרים בן אברהם עוזיאל זלצמן ז"ל

**Question:** I have heard that the *mitzvah* of eating *matzah* was supposed to be to eat one *k'zayit* but that it became a *mitzvah* to eat five *k'zeitim*. Is that true, and if so, how and why is that?

**Answer:** There is no individual *mitzvah* to eat five *k'zeitim* of *matza*. Rather, the fact that *matzah* “wears different hats” makes it necessary to eat multiple *k'zeitim* – between three and five to be “less exact.”

The first two “hats” come at what we call “*motzi, matzah*.” The *Seder* is a *Yom Tov* meal, which, Rabbinically, requires bread, which must be *matzah* rather than *chametz*. At this time (according to most *Rishonim* – see below), we also want to fulfill the *mitzvah* from the Torah to eat *matzah* (Pesachim 120a). The interaction between the two requirements causes complication. We usually have two full loaves (*lechem mishneh*) for Shabbat/*Yom Tov* meals (Berachot 39b). On Pesach, we use a broken “loaf” of *matzah*, based on the idea of *lechem oni* (ibid.). One *machloket Rishonim* is whether we need *lechem mishneh* plus a broken *matzah* or whether one of the two loaves should be broken (see Rosh, Pesachim 10:30). We *pasken* the former approach (Shulchan Aruch, Orach

Chayim 475:1).

Another *machloket Rishonim* (see Tosafot, Berachot 39b) is whether the same *matza* can be used for the two elements. One approach is that if one uses one *matza* despite the two *berachot* (and elements), it violates the rule to not do “*mitzvot* in bunches.” A second approach is that it is enough to eat from one *matza* because there is one classic *mitzvah* (eating *matzah*). The *beracha* of *Hamotzi* is just a regular *beracha* on food, not a separate act of *mitzvah* or a sign of one. The Shulchan Aruch (OC 475:1) rules that we must eat from separate *matzot* and adds that one requires a *k'zayit* from each. This is the “second *k'zayit*.”

Some question why we would need a full *k'zayit* from the “*matza* of *Hamotzi*,” considering that we make *Hamotzi* on any amount of bread. The Pri Chadash (ad loc., cited by the Mishna Berura 475:9) says it is because of a *machloket* whether the whole *matza* is for *Hamotzi* and the broken one is for the *mitzvah* of *matzah*, or vice versa. This causes us to treat each *matza* as if it is the one for the *mitzvah* of *matzah*, so that we need a *k'zayit* of each. Some say that this *chumra* is anachronistic. Since nowadays participants only receive a small amount from the “whole” and “broken” *matzot* held by the leader of the *Seder*, there is little purpose for more than a second full *k'zayit* (see Dirshu 474:8;

Halichot Shlomo, Moadim I:9:40). Others try to uphold the *minhag* of two *k'zeitim* on various grounds (see Piskei Teshuvot 475:5). In any case, all major requirements are fulfilled by eating one *k'zayit* from any *matza* (Mishna Berura 575:11).

The next *k'zayit* is for *korech*, which is a remembrance of the way Hille instructed people to eat *matzah* and *maror* together when having a *Seder* with a *Korban Pesach*. For this, all agree that one *k'zayit* suffices.

The final eating is the *afikoman*. The Shulchan Aruch (OC 477:1) suffices with one *k'zayit*, but *Acharonim* bring a *minhag* to have two *k'zeitim*. Some *Rishonim* (see Rashi, Pesachim 119b) say *afikoman* is intended to be the main fulfillment of eating *matzah*, but that does not explain two *k'zeitim* since there is no new *beracha* of *Hamotzi* on it. The Magen Avraham (477:1) says that since the *afikoman* is a remembrance of the *Korban Pesach*, (Rosh, Pesachim 10:34), we have one *k'zayit* to represent the *korban* and one representing the *matzah* eaten with it. The

Taz (477:1) says that we eat an especially big amount because the *mitzvah* is dear to us. Either way, this *minhag* is a *chumra*, which is no more than preferable (Mishna Berura 477:1; Yalkut Yosef, Tzafun 1).

The stakes between the different opinions are small. *Poskim* agree that for the “second *k'zayit*” each time, one can follow a lenient opinion on the size of a *k'zayit*, and most of us will eat a much bigger *shiur* if we assume only *k'zayit* (see Ohr L'tziyon III:15:12). So our big *k'zayit* will come at least close to covering a basic two *k'zeitim*. ■

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