YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

**THE LAWS OF THE *BERAKHOT***

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**Shiur #18: *Betzi’at Ha-Pat* (3)**

***Lechem Mishneh* (1)**

**Rav David Brofsky**

Last week, we concluded our discussion of *betzi’at ha-pat*. In previous *shiurim*, we discussed the type of bread upon which one should preferably recite the blessing of *ha-motzi*, the manner in which the blessing is recited, and the way in which the bread is cut and distributed. We also analyzed the practice of dipping one’s bread into salt after reciting the blessing and whether it is necessary to do so nowadays.

This week, we will discuss *betzi’at ha-pat* as it is performed on Shabbat. The Talmud instructs us to eat three Shabbat meals and to “break bread” (*li-vtzo’a*) on *lechem mishneh*. In this context, we will discuss only those issues pertinent to *betzi’at ha-pat*; we will not elaborate upon the various details of *lechem mishneh*.

**The Source of *Lechem Mishneh* and Whether Women are Obligated**

The Talmud (*Shabbat* 117b) teaches that one must eat three Shabbat meals (*shalosh se’udot*):

Our Rabbis taught: How many meals must one eat on the Sabbath? Three… R. Yochanan observed: “And Moshe said, ‘Eat that *today*; for *today* is a Sabbath unto the Lord; *today* you shall not find it in the field’” (*Shemot* 16: 25)… The Rabbis … include [that of] the evening.

The Sefer Ha-Yere’im (92) rules that the obligation of *shalosh se’udot* is *mi-deoraita*. The Arukh Ha-Shulchan (291:1) cites the Levush who concurs, and adds that it must at least be an enactment of Moshe Rabbeinu. Most Acharonim, however, understand that although the *gemara* derives this obligation from Biblical verses, the mitzva is actually only *mi-derabanan*.

The Rambam (*Hilkhot Shabbat* 29:9), and Shulchan Arukh (291:2) assign specific times to each of these meals – night, morning and afternoon. The *Acharonim* discuss this significant point, as at times – such as on an Erev Pesach that falls out on Shabbat – one may wish to eat all three meals before midday.

The Talmud (ibid., see also see also Berakhot 39b) also teaches that “on the Shabbat, one must break bread over two loaves, it is written, ‘twice as much bread’”. The verse (Shemot 16:22) refers to the double portion of “*man*” collected on Friday, as “*man*” did not fall on Shabbat.

As in the case of the obligation to eat three meals, most *Acharonim* maintain that the obligation of *lechem mishneh* is most likely only *mi-derabanan*. For example, the Peri Megadim (MZ 291) and Magen Avraham (618:10) insist that the obligation is only *mi-derababan*; elsewhere, the Magen Avraham (254:23) even refers to having *lechem mishneh* at a meal as “not such an obligation” (“*eina chova kol kakh*”).

However, numerous *Acharonim* insist that the obligation of *lechem mishneh* is *mi-de’oraita*. The Taz (678:2), for example, assumes that the obligation of *lechem mishneh* must certainly be *mi-deoraita*, and he therefore insists that purchasing bread for *lechem mishneh* is more important than preparing other dishes for the meal. The Arukh Ha-Shulchan (274:1) also argues that *lechem mishneh* is a biblical requirement.

This discussion may be related to a different question: Are women obligated in *lechem mishneh*? On the one hand, *lechem mishneh* is seemingly a standard *mitzvat asei she-hazeman gerama*, from which women are exempt. However, the *Rishonim* offer compelling reasons for obligating women as well.

Rabbeinu Tam (*Sefer Ha-Yashar, chelek Ha-Teshuvot* 70; see Ran, *Shabbat* 44a and Maharam Mi-Rutenburg, Responsa 473 [Prague]) suggests that women may be obligated in *lechem mishneh* due to the principle of “*af hen hayu be-oto ha-nes*,” “they too were included in this miracle.” The Talmud employs this principle to obligate women in *neirot Chanuka* (*Shabbat* 23a), *keri’at ha-Megilla* (*Megilla* 4a) and *arba kosot* (*Pesachim* 108b). The *Rishonim* debate whether the Talmud intends that women also **benefited** from the miracle or that they **caused** the miracle (see Tosafot, *Megilla* 4a, s.v. *she-af*; Tosafot, *Pesachim* 108b, s.v. *hayu*). Assuming that the principle means that women were also miraculously saved, Rabbeinu Tam suggests that since *lechem mishneh* is intended to serve as a reminder of the miracle of the double portion of *mann* that fell on Friday, women are equally obligated in this obligation. The Ran adds another reason for obligating women – men and women share all the obligations of Shabbat equally.

This debate sheds light on the nature and scope of the principle of *af hen hayu be-oto ha-nes* as well as the source of the obligation of *lechem mishneh*. Some *Rishonim* (see, for example, the comments of Tosafot cited above) conclude that the principle of *af hen* only applies to *mitzvot* of rabbinic origin. Therefore, they explain, the Talmud did not apply *af hen* to the *mitzvoth* of *sukka*, *matza*, and other Biblical *mitzvot* associated with miraculous events. These *Rishonim* assume, however, that theoretically, *af hen* could apply whenever a *mitzva* is associated with and serves as a reminder of a miraculous event.

R. Moshe Soloveitchik (1879–1941) offered a different perspective. He suggested that *af hen* only applies to *mitzvot* whose essence is rooted in *pirsumei nissa*, the obligation to publicize the miracle. While the purpose of *neirot Chanuka*, *keri’at ha-Megilla*, and *arba kosot* is to publicize miraculous events, one cannot assign this purpose to *sukka*, *tefillin*, or even *lechem mishneh*. Theoretically, he concludes, *af hen* could apply to Biblical *mitzvot*, but the *mitzvot* of *pisumei nissa* all happen to be Rabbinic in origin.

Accordingly, it seems that those who suggest that women are obligated in *lechem mishneh* due to the principle of *af hen* must maintain that *lechem mishneh* is only *mi-derabbanan*. *Af hen*, according to these *Rishonim*, cannot apply to a Biblical *mitzva*. However, those who maintain that women are exempt or that they are obligated due to the principle obligating men and women equally in the *mitzvot* of Shabbat may maintain that *lechem mishneh* is a Biblical obligation, as we saw above.

The Shulchan Arukh (291:6) rules that women are obligated in all three Shabbat meals. The Mishna Berura (274:1; see also Bi’ur Halakha 291:6) rules that women are also obligated in *lechem mishneh*. In his *Ha-Elef Lekha Shelomo* (114), R. Shlomo Kluger (1783–1869) supports the widespread practice in his time of women not observing the obligation of *lechem mishneh*, insisting that women are exempt.

Although we summarized the debate regarding the halakhic origin and status of *lechem mishneh*, it remains difficult to understand how some can understand the obligation of *lechem mishneh* to be of Biblical origin, especially if the obligation to eat three meals may only be *mi-derabanan*! In order to understand this position, we must first understand the nature of the obligation of *lechem mishneh*.

Next week, we will discuss the manner in which *lechem mishneh* is fulfilled and address the nature of the *mitzva* and its relationship to the more universal laws of *betzi’at ha-pat*.