YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

**THE LAWS OF THE *BERAKHOT***

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**Shiur #21: *Birkat Ha-Motzi***

**The Definition of Bread**

***Pat Ha-Ba’ah Be-Kisanin* (2)**

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**Introduction**

Last week, we began our study of the *birkat ha-pat*, *birkat* *ha-motzi*. We explained that we will divide our discussion of *birkat ha-motzi* into three parts: *Pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* (grain-based baked products upon which one generally recites *borei minei* *mezonot* unless they are eaten as a meal), *hafka’at shem lechem* (circumstances in which bread is transformed into a food upon which one no longer recites the blessing of *ha-motzi*), and foods upon which one always says *borei minei* *mezonot*, even if eaten as the basis of a meal (pasta, pancakes, etc.).

Regarding the definition of *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin*, upon which one recites *borei minei mezonot* unless is it eaten as the basis of one’s meal, we summarized the three views cited by the Beit Yosef (168). The Rambam (*Hilkhot Berakhot* 3:9) writes that “dough that was kneaded with honey, oil, or milk, or mixed together with different condiments and baked is referred to as *pat haba'ah be-kisanin.* Although it [resembles] bread, the blessing *borei minei mezonot* is recited over it.” The Darkhei Moshe (168) adds that the condiments or juice must be the primary ingredients, significantly changing the dough. Alternatively, Rabbeinu Chananel (cited by Talmidei Rabbeinu Yona, *Berakhot* 29a, s.v. *ve-ein*) explains that *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* refers to “pockets made from dough … and one puts nuts, honey and other sweet things into them.” Finally, Rashi (*Berakhot* 41b, s.v. *pat*) cites R. Hai Gaon, who explains that *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* refers to bread that is dry and brittle, like hard pretzels, crackers, and even dry “breadsticks.”

R. Yosef Karo, both in his Beit Yosef and in the Shulchan Arukh (168:7), rules in accordance with all three opinions. We noted that the *Acharonim* disagree as to whether we accept all three opinions due to the principle of *safek de-rabannan le-kula* (we rule leniently when there is a doubt regarding a matter of Rabbinic origin), or whether all three views are actually in agreement and merely reflect examples of the types of foods that one generally eats as a snack (Ma’amar Mordekhai 168:14; Arukh Ha-Shulchan 168:23). We suggested practical halakhic differences between these two approaches.

This week, we will discuss the definition of “*kevi’at se’uda*,” when one would be obligation to wash and recite the *birkat ha-motzi* before and *birkat ha-mazon* after eating *pat* *ha-ba’ah be-kisanin*.

**Why Does *Kevi’at Se’uda* Change the Blessing over *Pat Ha-Ba’ah Be-Kisanin*?**

In two places, the Talmud (*Berakhot* 41b and 42a) rules that when *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* is eaten as the basis of a meal, one recites *ha-motzi* before and *birkat ha-mazon* after eating. The *Rishonim* differ as to why *kevi’at se’uda* changes the blessing from *borei minei mezonot* to *ha-motzi*.

Some *Rishonim* claim that *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* may have a “dual identity.” The Ra’ah (*Berakhot* 39a) writes:

And that which we say regarding *pat* *ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* that when one makes it the basis of his meal he recites *ha-motzi*… and when he does not make it the basis of his meal he says *borei minei mezonot*… this is not because of the large amount [that he eats]… but rather because *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* is not considered to be bread, but rather a food made from the five species whose pockets (*kisanin*) and its context remove it from the category of bread, as it is not the way of people [to base their meal] on this type of bread. However, when one make it the basis of his meal, he considers it and makes it the equivalent of bread.

According to the Ra’ah, when one bases his meal on *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin*, it acquires the status of bread and is therefore worthy of the blessings of *ha-motzi* and *birkat ha-mazon*.

The Rambam (*Hilkhot Berakhot* 3:9), on the other hand, seems to disagree. He writes:

Similar [laws apply to] dough that was kneaded with honey, oil, or milk, or mixed together with different condiments and baked. It is referred to as *pat ha-ba'ah be-kisanin*. **Although it [resembles] bread**, the blessing *borei minei mezonot* is recited over it. If, however, one uses it as the basis of a meal, one should recite the blessing *ha-motzi*.

The Rambam implies that although *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* is considered to be bread, its blessing is a function of the manner in which it is eaten. When eaten as a snack, one recites *borei minei mezonot*; however when it is used as the basis of one’s meal (*kav’a se’udata aleha*), one says *ha-motzi*.

One might suggest that the *Rishonim* disagree as to whether the blessings of *ha-motzi* and *birkat ha-mazon* are said over bread or over a meal. According to the Ra’ah, *ha-motzi* and *birkat ha-mazon* are recited over bread, and therefore, *kevi’at se’uda* is essential in defining *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* as “bread.” The Rambam, however, believes that as long as one makes the *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* the basis of his meal, the proper blessings are *ha-motzi* before and *birkat ha-mazon* after the meal.

This question may be relevant to the definition of *kevi’at se’uda* as well.

**Definition of *Kevi’at Se’uda***

When is one considered to have made the *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* the basis of his meal? The Talmud implies different definitions of *kevi’at se’uda*. In *Berakhot* 42a, R. Nachman says that “upon something that others make the basis of their meal (*kol she-acheirim kove’im alav se’uda*), one must bless.” R. Nachman implies that *kevi’at se’uda* is a function of a societal norm. On the other hand, later in that passage, R. Yehuda explains that “where they are made the basis of the meal (*kava se’udatei alayhu*),” one must say *birkat ha-mazon*. R. Yehuda implies that *kevi’at se’uda* is a function of the person’s own practice or intention. Of course, these different understanding may have different practical applications.

We find these different understandings in the *Rishonim* as well. The Rosh (*Berakhot* 6:30) records:

Rabbeinu Moshe writes that if others do not make this the basis [of their meal], even if he does make it the basis [of his meal], he does not bless [*ha-motzi*], as we follow the practice of the majority of people, and his own practice is considered to be irrelevant (*batla da’ato etzel kol adam*). The Ra’avad writes that if he makes it a basis [of his meal], even the slightest bit, he recites the *ha-motzi* blessing before [eating] and the three blessings [i.e. *birkat ha-mazon*] afterwards. The words of Rabbeinu Moshe seem correct.

The Ra’avad, as cited by the Rosh, clearly believes that one’s personal, subjective intention determines whether or not he says *ha-motzi* before eating *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin*. Rabbeinu Moshe disagrees and accepts an objective definition of *kevi’at se’uda*.

The Rosh adds that “if initially his intention was to eat a bit and bless *borei minei mezonot* and afterwards he ate the amount which others eat as the basis of their meal, he says the three blessings [i.e. *birkat ha-mazon*].”

Interestingly, the Menachem Ha-Meiri (1249 - 1310) writes:

If one eats [*pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin*] not as the part of a meal, but rather by itself, and did not make it the basis of a meal, he says *borei minei mezonot* … If he makes it the basis of a meal, he recites *ha-motzi* and the three blessings [i.e. *birkat ha-mazon*]. If he does not make it the basis of a meal but he eats an amount that others would make the basis of their meal, in this case as well, it is out opinion that he says *ha-motzi*. (*Berakhot* 41b)

The Meiri apparently accepts both views – both the view of the Ra’avad, who understands *kevi’ut se’uda* to be subjective and dependent upon the intention of the individual, and that of Rabbeinu Moshe, who emphasizes the practice of most people, which serves as an objective standard of *kevi’at se’uda*.

The Shulchan Arukh (168:6) rules:

One says *borei minei mezonot* [before eating] *pat ha-ba’ah be-kisanin* and the *Bracha Me'ein Shalosh* [i.e. *Al Ha-Michya*] afterwards. And if he eats an amount that others make the basis of their meal (*she-acheirim* *regilim likvo’a alav*), even though he is not satiated from it, he recites the blessings *of ha-motzi* and *birkat ha-mazon*… And if he ate an amount that others eat as the basis of their meals, even if he makes it the basis of a meal, he recites only *borei minei mezonot*… as his opinion is his practice in not considered in light of the practice of others.

The halakha is in accordance with the view of Rabbeinu Moshe, cited by the Rosh.

Next week, we will attempt to define the quantity one must eat in order to become obligated in *birkat ha-motzi* and *birkat ha-mazon*.