

Insights into Halacha

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Lechem Mishneh with Mezonot?

Several weeks ago, at a local shul Kiddush, this author noticed that Rav Efrayim Landy, Rav of Aderes Eliyahu in Givat Zev, passed over a piece of cake to specifically make Mezonos on two Rugelach. He remarked that his choice was a matter of preference – not of taste, but rather halachic preference. Noting my confusion – as I was unaware of any halachic optimality inherent in Rugelach as opposed to cake – he referenced a somewhat obscure ruling of the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch's... But to properly understand the context, a bit of background is in order.

Let's revisit a twist on an important part of Shabbat, the Shabbat day Kiddush. As discussed in previous articles over the years, we know that Kiddush must be performed B'MAKOM SEUDA, in the same place as (meaning as part of) a meal. In other words, in order to fulfill the Kiddush obligation, it must serve as the preamble to an actual Seuda. The Rashbam explains that this halacha is gleaned from the pasuk in Yeshayahu, V'KARATA LASHABBAT ONEG, and you will proclaim Shabbat

as a delight for you', meaning in the same place where you proclaim Shabbat (making Kiddush), there must also be the delight (referring to celebrating the Shabbat Seuda).

What is a Seuda?

Although there is some debate as to how 'Seuda' is defined, with the Vilna Gaon famously maintaining that Kiddush may only be performed with a full bread Seuda – meaning exclusively when washing for HaMotzi, nonetheless, the common minhag is to follow the Magen Avraham's psak, that for this halacha, eating Mezonot is sufficient to be considered a Seuda for Kiddush purposes. In fact, this approach of the Magen Avraham's was accepted and considered 'Minhag Yisrael' by all sectors of world Jewry, certainly for Shabbat day Kiddush. That is why by almost any Kiddush in almost any shul anywhere in the world, it is de rigueur to have a Kiddush with Mezonot as the Seuda (that follows Kiddush).

Rabbi Spitz points out in a footnote that Kiddush with Mezonot - even though we regard it as a seuda for the purpose of connecting it to Kiddush, it does NOT qualify as one of the required seudot for Shabbat.

Mezonos Lechem Mishneh

Yet, there is an interesting related debated halacha, whose existence

many are entirely unaware of (including this author, up until recently). As pointed out to this author by Rav Efrayim Landy, in the final line of his passage regarding the halachot of Lechem Mishneh at a Shabbat Seuda, Rav Shlomo Ganzfried, the renowned Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, advanced a novel approach. He wrote that even when making Kiddush with Mezonot, one should nonetheless make sure to take SH'TAYIM SH'LEIMOT as Lechem Mishneh, with some editions adding in parenthesis, KEIN RA'ITI LINHOG EITZEL GADOL ECHAD (emulating a certain Gadol whom he saw doing so).

Meaning, even when making Kiddush with Mezonot, the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch rules that one should ensure that he has Lechem Mishneh of his Mezonot. As an example, he is teaching us that if about to be munching on Rugelach, then the Kiddush should be made with two whole Rugelach. The Kaf HaChayim actually cites this ruling with no dissenting opinion.

Staunch Opposition

On the other hand, several Poskim of the late 1800s and early 1900s opposed this chiddush, with several, including the Ba'er Yaakov, stating simply that as Kiddush on Mezonot is not the IKAR SEUDA (main Shabbat meal), Lechem Mishneh simply cannot be mandated for it. Moreover, it is

pointed out that this is not the common minhag, and he has not seen anyone actively doing so.

Others, including the Maharsham and Katzeh HaMateh, raise a pointed two-fold objection to this hanhaga. First, they cite that the Tosefet Shabbat and the Machatzit HaShekel maintain that one may fulfill his Lechem Mishneh obligation with a Mezonot Challah (Pat HaBa'a b'Kisnin), yet, they define this as meaning that if one only has one regular Challah, he may then use a Mezonot Challah in conjunction with it as part of his Seuda, to combine to be considered Lechem Mishneh together. This implies that one cannot use two Mezonot items to be considered Lechem Mishneh.

Shabbat is Koveya

Moreover, as briefly cited by the Shaarei Teshuva, there is another relevant rationale advanced by several Poskim that may impact this discussion. Rav Avraham Azulai (great-grandfather of the Chida), citing a manuscript from an early source; likely the Mahara"ch Ohr Zarua (Rav Chaim, son of the famed Ohr Zarua, Rav Yitzchak of Vienna, from the early 1300s), as this ruling is found almost word-for-word in his responsa, opines that the same way Shabbat creates a KEVIYUT for Maaser, meaning although one is normally allowed to eat untithed food

DERECH ARAI (in a temporary manner), on Shabbat one may not, as Shabbat itself lends a certain inherent importance, and only 'Maasered' (tithed) food may be eaten on Shabbat], perhaps the same applies to eating Pat HaBa'a b'Kisnin.

In other words, although normally Pat HaBa'a b'Kisnin's b'racha is Mezonot unless one eats copious quantities of it and is Koveya Seuda with it - when its b'racha becomes HaMotzi, perhaps the same idea is applied here - that if one eats such Mezonot on Shabbat, it automatically becomes HaMotzi, due to Shabbat's inherent importance. In other words, Shabbat creates a keviyut (sense of permanence), which instantly turns these Mezonot items into HaMotzi, even if only partaking of small amounts.

Not a Daat Yachid, there are other Poskim who support this idea, at least in theory, including the Mahari Chagiz (author of the Halachot Ketanot) and the Minchat Chinuch (regarding the b'racha on Matza on Pesach, that the Mitzva creates KEVA), as well as several Rishonim who may infer this way, including sefer Tanya Rabbati and Shibolei HaLeket citing Rabbeinu Avigdor Kohen-Tzedek, and the Ria"z (Rav Yeshaya Ha'acharon of Italy), all of whom maintain that even a casual meal (temporary) is considered a

formal (permanent) Seuda on Shabbat.

[However, it is important to note that this is not the halacha pesuka, as many Acharonim are quick to point out that although Shabbat creates Keviyut, it still does not automatically create a 'Shiur Keviyut' - the amount of food which would still be halachically necessary for a Mezonot Pat HaBa'a b'Kisnin item to become HaMotzi. These Poskim include the Ginat V'radim, the Maamar Mordechai (regarding Sukka, that Sukkot mandates a keviyut that Pat HaBa'a b'Kisnin should be eaten in a Sukka, but not that it upgrades its b'racha to HaMotzi), Rav Meir Arik, Rav Yitzchak Isaac Chaver (who also utilizes this distinction to argue against the Magen Avraham's allowance of making Kiddush with Mezonot), the Chida (who concludes that the Ginat V'radim is correct), and the Shaarei Teshuva himself, who concludes like the Chida.]

The Maharsham and the Katzeh HaMateh use both of these arguments (albeit briefly) to argue on the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch. They maintains that combining both ideas, if one would use two Mezonot items (like our two Rugelach) as Lechem Mishneh to make Kiddush, one may be mandated to first do Netilat Yadayim and make HaMotzi, as it would now be deemed an actual formal Seudat Keva.

They therefore assert that it would be preferable not to make Kiddush with two Mezonot items as Lechem Mishneh, not to enter this halachic question and potential obligation of washing and Bentching. Indeed, the Katzeh HaMateh asserts rather strongly not to follow the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch's shita, writing that the minhag is not to do so, concluding that we should not come up with novel obligations."

Contemporary Conclusions?

Contemporary Poskim are divided as to the correct approach in this situation, whether Lechem Mishneh with Mezonot should be, shouldn't be, or may be done. The Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata actually cites all three options without a clear cut conclusion.

Rav Mordechai Eliyahu writes simply that the minhag is not to do so. Likewise, although in one teshuvah Rav Moshe Sternbuch posits a sevara as to the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch's rationale (that Lechem Mishneh signifies and showcases Kavod HaShabbat), adding that he was likely referring specifically to cake, as it is a 'safeik Pat' (see Orach Chayim 168:7), nonetheless, in a later teshuva, he questions the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch's ruling altogether, referring to it as a "chiddush", and that he did not find any other sources who agree, and concluding that we don't do it.

Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky holds similarly, writing succinctly that it is a that is a novel concept, and the minhag is not to do so.

Indeed, not being makpid on this seems to be the common minhag, as even the idea of Lechem Mishneh with Mezonot is glaringly absent from the vast majority of halachic literature.

The She'arim M'tzuyanim b'Halacha writes that Rav Eliezer Silver (Rav of Cincinnati, and head of the Agudas HaRabbonim of United States and Canada) cited several of the aforementioned sevaros and Poskim, including the Minchat Chinuch and Maharsham, and pointed out that therefore if one would be makpid to make Kiddush with Lechem Mishneh of Mezonot, he may be required to wash and make HaMotzi, implying that it would be better not to, and thus avoiding entering into the Sheila in the first place.

The Minchas Yitzchak also strongly questions the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch's ruling, presuming it is based on the Machloket Rishonim whether or not Seuda Sh'lshit mandates bread, or suffices with Mezonot (discussed later in the article). He refers to being makpid with Lechem Mishneh of Mezonot as a CHUMRA AL GABEI CHUMRA, compounded stringency. He concludes that a Baal Nefesh may be machmir b'tzina,

stringent in his own home, but one may not do it publicly, as then it would be considered YOHARA (religious arrogance) and may cause machloket.

Two Rugelach are Better than One...

On the other hand, come what may, it is known that there were Poskim who were indeed makpid for the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch's psak, of specifically using Lechem Mishneh of Mezonot at Kiddush, including the Minchat Elazar of Munkacsz, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, his brother, Rav Avraham Dov Auerbach, Rav of Teverya, Rav Yisrael Yaakov Fischer, as well as the Yerushalmi Gaon, Rav Zundel Kroizer.

The Klausenberger Rebbe was also makpid for the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch's shita, and even wrote an extensive teshuva defending his opinion from his detractors. He maintains that Mi'd'Orayta, Pat HaBa'a b'Kisnin has a din of actual Pat, however, Mi'd'rabbanan, 'Lechem' refers to actual bread that one must make HaMotzi and Birkat HaMazon on. Hence, for Lechem Mishneh, he avers that it is worthwhile to be makpid l'chumra on the Din Torah, and make Kiddush with Lechem Mishneh of Mezonot.

He also argues on the Maharsham's assessment, stating that Rabbeinu Avigdor, the Shibolei HaLeket, Agur,

and other Poskim who maintain that Shabbat's inherent holiness makes a keviyut that can potentially turn Pat HaBa'a b'Kisnin from Mezonot into HaMotzi, was only stated regarding Seudat Erev or Seudat Boker, meaning the main Shabbat meals - and not an informal one, citing precedent from many Poskim, including the Vilna Gaon and Chatam Sofer.

Ergo, the Klausenberger Rebbe asserts, that certainly regarding Kiddush on Mezonot on Shabbat - which is only eaten in order to be considered Kiddush B'Makom Seuda - as anyway, later on a full Shabbat Seuda is eaten, which would prove that this was not intended to be the full Seudat Boker, it is clear and obvious, that there is no chashash (prospect) that this informal achilat arai would require Netilat Yadayim and Birkat HaMazon.

In conclusion, with no clear-cut contemporary consensus, one should certainly ask his rabbinic authority for guidance, as to whether he can and/or should make Kiddush with Lechem Mishneh of Mezonot. Who would have thought that a few Rugelach can be the basis of an obscure halachic debate? Either way, we at least have gained a new appreciation for the seemingly simple Shabbat Day Kiddush.

The author wishes to thank Rav Efraim Landy for bringing this fascinating debate to my attention, as well as my talmid, Rabbi Yitzchak Rubin, for his assistance and serving as my sounding board on this complicated inyan.

Ed. note: The paragraphs written in italics and in light blue font are taken from Rabbi Spitz's copious footnotes. For fuller treatment of the subject, see the article on his website with all the footnotes. The green paragraphs are mine.

For any questions, comments or for the full Mareh Mekomot & sources, please email the author: yspitz@ohr.edu

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Disclaimer: This is not a comprehensive guide, rather a brief summary to raise awareness of the issues. In any real case one should ask a competent Halachic authority.

Rabbi Yehuda Spitz's English halacha sefer, "Food: A Halachic Analysis" (Mosaica/Feldheim) containing over 500 pages featuring over 30 comprehensive chapters discussing the myriad halachic issues pertaining to food, is now available online and in bookstores everywhere."