

HALOCHOSCOPE ^{TO 1}

Congregation Shaaray Tefilah, Pittsburgh, PA

This week's question:

At a meal where rice is being served, and cake or crackers are also present and will be eaten later, is it preferable to eat some cake first in order to recite the Brocha over it?

In a related question: When snacking at a party, should one choose a cake-type snack before a rice-krispy type snack?

The issues:

(A) The Brocha Mezonos, and why we say it over rice.

(B) *Kedima*, preference in Brochos.

(A) The Brocha over rice

There are five grain-groups produced from grass plants that, when ground into flour and baked as a bread, have the Brocha Hamotzie. These are: Wheat, barley, rye, oats and spelt. All have the characteristics of being able to leaven (ferment naturally through their own yeast properties). Of these, wheat and barely are considered main categories, with spelt as a sub-category of wheat, and rye and oats a subcategory of barley. There are other species in these groups; for example, wild rye, which is not normally used as human food, but, being related to rye, would have the Brocha Hamotzie if made into bread.

When any of the five grains is baked, not as a bread but as a sweet or snack food, or cooked in liquid, the Brocha recited is not Hamotzie, but Borei Minei Mezonos. This is a special Brocha meaning that the food is not merely fruit of the ground, but *Mazon*, a satisfying meal in its own right, similar to bread. The *Brocha Acharona*, after-Brocha, on these foods is also not the regular Borei Nefashos said for fruit, but also not Bircas Hamazon said for bread. It is M'ein Shalosh (Al Hamichya), a condensed version of Bircas Hamazon. This Brocha is reserved for both food that can be considered a mini-meal and for the seven species singled out by the Torah as the special blessings of Eretz Yisroel. Although only wheat and barley are specified in the list of the seven species, the other three grains, being subcategories of wheat and barley, also require the M'ein Shalosh. In addition, they are Mazon since they can also be made into bread for which Bircas Hamazon is said.

There are two exceptions to the Brocha of Mezonos: (1) If one substi-

tutes baked snack-food for bread in his meal, he must treat the cookies and cakes like bread (Hamotzie-Bircas Hamazon). This does not include cooked forms of dough, such as pasta, or doughnuts which are fried. (2) If the grain is cooked whole and no part of it comes off during the cooking, the Brocha Ha'adama is said and Borei Nefashos afterwards. This includes roasted or toasted kernels. Over plain flour Shehakol is recited.

Rice and millet are not related to any of the five grains, except for their coming from a grass. However, they are staples in the diets of many parts of the world and can even be made into a bread. In recognition of this, the Talmud deliberates the Brocha over them, questioning whether their bloating is considered leavening. The final conclusion of the Talmud is that one should recite Borei Minei Mezonos over rice-bread or any meal of cooked rice where the grains are not intact. [There is no definite conclusion about millet; Tosafos concludes that one should not say Mezonos over millet. There is a view that reverses our translation of the Talmudic terms for rice and millet.] When the grains are intact one says Ha'adama. Since it is not really a bread grain, one does not say Hamotzie even on its bread, or Bircas Hamazon or M'ein Shalosh afterwards, but Borei Nefashos.

Wild rice is not related to regular white rice despite its appearance. Nor is it related to oats although it is also known as water oats. It should be considered a regular vegetable with regard to its Brocha. However, it is often cooked together with white rice, which is the major part of the mixture and would therefore be considered the *Ikar*, the main dish, and dictate the Brocha accordingly.

Rice is only Ha'adama if the grain is intact, which many Poskim say is not the case once the husks are removed (usually the case today). Wild rice is still Ha'adama after it is broken up, if it is still recognisable. Once it has disintegrated to the point that it is one large mass, its Brocha is Shehakol. The same is true of millet, corn, kasha and other grainy foods. [It should be noted that there are a number of prominent Poskim who consider all of these cereal-staples Mazon and that their Brocha is Mezonos. However, we do not follow their ruling.] [See Berachos 36b-38a. 44a. commentaries, Poskim, Tur, Shulchan Aruch O.C. 168. 208. Mishne Berura 25, Biur Halacha: "Ad" and "Al". commentaries.]

(B) Kedima

When eating a number of different foods, there is a preferred order in which they should be eaten, because of the Brochos recited over them. Two factors are taken into account: the Brocha and the food. If the foods require more than one Brocha, the more specialized Brocha should be said first. For example, if one is about to eat a vegetable and an egg, one should say Ha'adama on the vegetable first. Ha'adama, which is only said over vegetables, is more specialized than Shehakol which may be said over anything. If the foods all require the same Brocha, the Brocha will be said over one of them and will no longer need

to be said for the others. This way the food chosen for the Brocha will be singled out to represent all the rest for the Mitzvah. Therefore, the most important or prominent of them should be chosen. To decide which is most important, a few qualities are taken into consideration. For example, if it is a platter of fruit, and one is whole while the rest are cut up, the whole fruit takes precedence. If they are all whole, one should say the Brocha over the one he likes most. If one of them is of the seven species that Eretz Yisroel is blessed with (wheat, barley, grapes/wine, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates), the Brocha should be said over it. If there are more than one of the seven in the platter, the Brocha is said over the one mentioned closest to the word "Eretz" in the Passuk. This applies both to those species that require Haeitz and those that require Mezonos or Hamotzie. Thus, if a plate of bread or cookies has some made of wheat and some of barley, the Brocha is to be said over the wheat products which are mentioned earlier in the Passuk. If there is a spelt bread and a rye bread on the platter, the spelt takes precedence because it is a sub-species of wheat, while rye is a type of barley. If, however, the choice is between spelt and barley, barley comes first, because it is actually mentioned in the Passuk. [See Berachos 39a, 41a, Tosafos, etc. Tur, Sh. Ar. O.C. 211. 168.]

In our case the questions arise where there is a choice between saying the Brocha Mezonos over rice foods or bread-grain foods. Understandably, if the grains in question are wheat or barley, one should say the Brocha over them because they are among the seven species of blessing. If the cookies are oatmeal, which is not mentioned directly in the Passuk as a blessing, should one say the Brocha over them or over the food he likes best even if it is the rice-krispy snack?

There are two reasons why the oatmeal cookies should take precedence. Firstly, as mentioned, the barley in the Passuk includes its subcategories such as oats, so, indirectly, oats are among the species of blessing, just as spelt takes precedence over oats because it is a wheat type. Secondly, oats can be baked into real bread, which would require Hamotzie and Bircas Hamazon, while rice never does. In this way, although in their present form they have the same Brocha, it appears that the leaven properties of the oatmeal make it more prominent. This is further attested to be the fact that the Brocha Achanorna over oatmeal is M'ein Shalosh while for the rice the Brocha Acharona is Borei Nefashos.

When there is a choice between the three grains not mentioned explicitly in the Passuk and a fruit of those mentioned, the rule is that the Mezonos Brocha takes precedence, not because it is a more prominent Brocha, but because the food is Mazon. Thus, we see that the Mazon is indeed the all-important factor in Kedima. If, therefore, one has the choice between beginning a snack with a piece of rice-snack or a date, one should say the Mezonos Brocha on the rice first. [See Levush O.C. 208:1 and 211:4, Hagahos.]

If, however, the choice is between intact grains, whose Brocha is Ha'adama, or flour, Shehakol, and a fruit of the seven species, the fruit comes first. The reason that the grains do not have the Brocha Mezonos in this state is

that they are no longer considered Mazon. For the same reason they are relegated in the order of priority. [Sh. Ar. O.C. 211:5, etc]

Note: What is known today as "rye-bread" often has only a minor proportion of rye, the majority being wheat. The same is often the case with oatmeal cookies.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

SCHEDULE:

SHABBOS SHACHARIS	9:00 am
SHABBOS MINCHA	5:10 pm
SHACHARIS SUNDAY	8:00 am
SHACHARIS MON ~ FRI	7:00 am
MINCHA SUN ~ THURS	5:30 pm
TU BISHVAT ON THURSDAY	
CANDLE-LIGHTING MISHPATIM	5:24 pm
MINCHA EREV SHABBOS	5:30 pm

SHIURIM:

GEMORA MAKOS~	
SUNDAY	7:15 am
HALACHA B'YUN~	
SUNDAY	9:15 am
MONDAY	8:30 pm
HILCHOS SHABBOS~	
SHABBOS	8:15 am

-Junior Minyan for boys on the third floor beginning at 9:15.

-Playgroup with refreshments for preschoolers and first-grade girls on the second floor.

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