

# HALOCHOSCOPE

**This week's question:**

A group would like to make a '*brochos/amein seuda*' – each participant eats a food of each *brocho* type. They recite their *brochos* separately and aloud. The others respond *amein* to every *brocho*, thus maximizing their merits, in the merit of a person in need, physically or spiritually, or as a gesture of thanksgiving. They try to get one hundred *brochos* and *ameins*. The only time they can get together will be late *Shabbos* afternoon. May they do this in the middle of a bread meal, such as *seuda shlishis* on *Shabbos*? Is this '*seuda*' good enough to count as *seuda shlishis*? If it is not, is this *mitzvah* worthy of overriding *seuda shlishis*, or will the merit be canceled by the loss of the greater *mitzvah* of *seuda shlishis*?

The issues:

A) *Amein*

B) *Seuda Shlishis*

C) *Pas Poteress*, the *brocha* on bread exempting other *brochos*; *Dvarim haba'im shelo machmas haseuda*, foods that are not part of a meal

A) *Amein*

The response '*amein*' appears throughout *Tanach* in various contexts. The Talmud attributes three connotations to it. It can be considered acceptance of an oath when said in response to an oath being imposed or administered. It could be considered acceptance of a deal or condition stated by a counterpart. It could be *ha'amanas devarim*, a demonstration of the acceptance of the truth of what had just been said. *Ha'amanas devarim* could apply to praise of Hashem or His works and deeds, or to a *brocha*, a blessing or prayer. The latter occurs as an obligation in relation to a Scriptural *mitzvah*, the *bircas kohanim*, priestly blessing. The congregation must respond *amein* after each of the three verses of the *brocha*. Some consider this obligation Scriptural.

The Talmud derives *ha'amana* from verses in the *Navi*, but the *Sifri* derives it from the Torah. The *Navi* might also have been fulfilling a Scriptural obligation. In this way the *Navi* would be considered a *giluy milsa*, revealing a Torah *mitzvah*. Some consider all applications of the response Rabbinically instituted. Others maintain that on a Scriptural *brocha* (such as *bircas hamazon*, *bircas hatorah* or *bircas kohanim*) it is Scripturally obligated. Actually, all implications are that though a *brocha* might be Rabbinically instituted, once it is uttered in one's presence he has a Scriptural *mitzvah* to respond. Yet it is possible that this *mitzvah* is voluntary. It was later made compulsory by the Rabbis.

The *mitzvah* to respond applies to a *brocha* uttered by an adult Jew. Some say it applies to the *brocha* of a child, or even a gentile if one is sure that he had Hashem in mind. If one heard only the end of a *brocha*, most poskim maintain that he is not obliged to respond, but may respond if he knows what the rest of the *brocha* was. If one heard the part with Hashem's Name, it is as though he heard the beginning. He may respond. This is

similar to the *ameins* in *Tehilim*. They are not on *brochos* but on praises.

One who answers *amein* to a *brocha* is considered as great as, if not greater than the one who recited the *brocha*. Clearly, one who recites the *brocha* aloud so that the listener should say *amein* to it, has a big share in the merit of the *amein*. In this way, the people gathered to recite the hundred *brochos* will all have the merit of at least one hundred *brochos* and as many *ameins* as there are listeners, multiplied by one hundred. [See Ha'azaiu 32:3 20, Sifri. Brochos 45a 47a 51b 53b, Shevuos 36a, Yerushalmi Sotah 5:2, Poskim. Rambam, Tefila 14, Kiryas Sefer. Tur Sh. Ar. OC 124 215, commentaries.]

### **B) Seuda Shlishis**

One way to fulfill the *mitzvah* to enjoy *Shabbos* is by eating delicious foods specially for *Shabbos*. Thus, we eat proper meals including bread as their mainstay. The Torah makes reference to this, regarding the double portions of *monn* that fell on *Erev Shabbos*. *Moshe Rabeinu* told the people: "*Ichluhu hayom*, eat it today [on *Shabbos*]." this is taken as a *mitzvah* to eat on *Shabbos*. The *Navi* [*Yeshaya 58:13*] mentions the *mitzvah* of *oneg*, delighting in *Shabbos*. Some *poskim* consider the *mitzvah* Scriptural, based on Torah verses. Some give it Scriptural significance, explained by the *Navi*. Others consider it *midivrei kabalah*, a Prophetic *mitzvah*. This is more powerful than a Rabbinical *mitzvah*, but not on the level of a Scriptural *mitzvah*.

The reference to eating *monn* on *Shabbos* uses the word '*hayom*, today', three times. From this the Talmud derives an obligation to eat three meals of bread on *Shabbos*. In former times it was normal to eat two full meals a day. The first would be in late morning. [Something small would usually be eaten right after *shacharis*.] The second was eaten after dark. *Shabbos* begins at sunset. There would now be a *seuda* at night, one in the late morning, and the third would be eaten in late afternoon. This *seuda shlishis* became known as *shalosh seudos*, three meals. The first two meals are usual. Therefore, the third symbolizes the entire *mitzvah* to eat all three. Some say that the bountiful reward for this *mitzvah* is most applicable to the third meal. It is harder to eat. The *poskim* stress the need to leave space for the third meal when eating the second. [The *Shulchan Aruch* places the laws of *seuda shlishis* under the heading 'Laws of *Shalosh Seudos*']. Some *poskim* consider the obligation of three meals Scriptural. Most consider it Rabbinical, and a minority view it as piety. Kabalists attach special significance to it.

The time of this *seuda* is based on a *mishna* discussing the laws of rescuing food from a fire. One may take what is needed for *Shabbos* meals: at night for three meals, in the morning for two meals and a '*mincha-time*' enough for one meal. This indicates the meal should be eaten at *mincha-time*. Theoretically, as long as it is not too close to the second meal one could eat the third meal in the morning. Most *poskim* conclude that it should be eaten in the afternoon, preferably following *mincha*.

*Shabbos* meals should be bread-based. The terminology of the Torah, *hu halechem*, indicates bread specifically. Two loaves are used to remind us of *lechem mishneh*, the double *monn* portion. The commentaries debate whether a double amount fell, twice what was need for the main two meals, and that they had to eat a third meal, or whether there was twice what would be needed for each of the three meals. According to the former opinion no *lechem mishneh* is needed for *shalosh seudos*. Some *poskim* require eating from both loaves at each meal. The Torah uses the word *lechem* for the *mitzvah* of

*bircas hamazon*, implying a correlation between *seudas Shabbos* and *bircas hamazon*. Some say that one must recite *bircas hamazon*, inserting *retzei* for *Shabbos*. If it is omitted, one must repeat *bircas hamazon*. If it was omitted at *seuda shlishis*, it need not be repeated. This implies that the third *seuda* is not as compulsory as the other two, or that bread is not as requisite for this *seuda*.

May '*mezonos*' type food be substituted for bread for the *Shabbos* meals? *Mezonos* foods could be used in place of bread in a meal. They would then require *hamotzie* and *bircas hamazon*. If they are eaten as snacks, they take the *brochos mezonos* and *me'ain shalosh*, a condensed version of *bircas hamazon* in a single *brocha*. There is mention of *Shabbos* in this *brocha*. The *poskim* debate whether omission invalidates the *brocha*. They hinge the discussion on whether this food eaten as a snack is considered fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of *seuda* on *Shabbos*. Some *poskim* specifically permit cake, meat, or even fruit and other delicacies in place of the bread in the third *seuda*. It qualifies as *oneg* since it is too fancy for the rest of the week. [See Beshalach 16:25. Brochos 44a 49a-b, Shabbos 117b-119a, Bechoros 2b, Poskim. Tur Sh. Ar. OC 243 291, commentaries. Levush 678 Taz 2. Tesh. Chas. Sofer OC 168. Kehilas Yaakov, Brochos 16.]

### **C) Bircas Hapas Poteress; Devarim Haba'im Shelo Machmas Haseuda**

Each food has its own *brocha*. When eating more than one food with the same *brocha*-type, one is chosen for the *brocha* and all the others are kept in mind. Often two foods are eaten together. One is *ikar*, primary, and the other is *tafel*, accompaniment or secondary. Though they have different *brochos*, only the *brocha* on the *ikar* is recited. Either the secondary food is considered as though it has no independent existence, or it exists but the *brocha* on the primary food serves it as well.

By its very nature, bread is not eaten alone, but with a spread, meat, vegetables or other foods. Anything eaten with bread is automatically considered secondary, with few exceptions. (Salty food might be eaten with bread to 'dilute the saltiness'. Bread is secondary in this case.) In addition, eating bread is always considered eating a 'meal'. The *brocha* on the bread is on the whole meal. Any food considered part of the meal requires no *brocha* in its own right. Some interpret this to mean that the other foods would usually be eaten in a meal and are also often eaten with bread. According to this view, foods never eaten with the bread could not be included in the *brocha* on the meal. Others say that the food must normally be included in a bread meal, but not necessarily eaten with the bread. The case debated by the Talmud is *dysa*, a porridge type food with similar ingredients to bread. It would be strange to eat it with bread, but it could be eaten in a meal.

The other foods require a *brocha*, so the bread *brocha* must be considered their own *brocha* as well. One way to view this is that they are secondary to the bread. The other way is to consider any 'meal' a bread meal. The foods are part of this meal. The bread *brocha* becomes the meal *brocha*. What if very little bread is eaten? One might be eating the bread only to 'make it into a meal'. He wants to attach the other food to some bread. What if the bread is less than a *kezayis*, the minimum for *bircas hamazon*? [One recites *hamotzie* on any tiny amount.] Does other food help to complete the required amount of the bread? It is hard to view the other foods as secondary to the little piece of bread. However, if the food is considered part of the bread meal, the *hamotzie* on the meal works for all of it. Some *poskim* maintain that the *brocha* is not for the bread as *ikar*, but

for the meal. Others recommend avoiding the bread in this situation, and reciting each *brocha*-type on each food. On *Shabbos* or *Yomtov*, the bread assumes more significance, and the meal can be considered attached to it. '*Mezonos*' type foods have a raised level of *ikar*. It is possible that a drink taken with them is automatically secondary. Some suggest taking the drink before the cake, reciting its *brocha*.

At certain stages in a meal foods do require their own *brochos*, mainly due their not being included in the meal. Meals were conducted differently in Talmudic times. People reclined on couches. The main food was placed on individual low tables. Sometimes, food was eaten as a snack before *netilas yadayim* and eating the first bite of bread, or even right after it. The snack was not part of the main meal and might not brought in on the little table. It required its own *brocha rishona* and often, *brocha acharona*, unless more of it would be consumed later on during the meal. When the meal was over the little table was removed with the remaining bread. More snacks might sometimes be served up. They could be the type otherwise eaten with bread. They were brought after the main food, and they required their own *brochos*. Though modern meals seem to merge the desert with the meal, the rules for the beginning of the meal are the same nowadays. Appetizers intended to complement the meal do not require their own *brochos*.

Foods eaten in the middle of the meal but not directly connected to it require their own *brocha rishona*, but no *brocha acharona* [though this point is debated by the Talmud]. To determine this, two factors are considered. Food eaten to fill and satisfy is evidently part of the meal. Food normally eaten with bread, as part of the main course, or eaten with bread this time, is either considered part of the meal or *tafel* to the bread. Fruits, at least raw, snacking vegetables, and sweets or cakes and cookies, are all generally not considered part of the meal, unless eaten with meat or cooked foods or to fill oneself. Wine always requires its own *brocha rishona*. [See Brochos 35b 40b-42b 44a, Poskim, Tur Sh. Ar, OC (174) 176 177:1 212, commentaries, Chazon Ish 27:(9), Igros Moshe OC III:33 IV:41-42, Tzitz Eliezer II:2 III:2.]

In summary, one should not avoid *seuda shlishis* for the sake of this *brocha* party. However, some would consider the party sufficient for *seuda shlishis*. Anyhow, foods should be chosen that would not be considered part of the meal. Then, they could be eaten during the *seuda* as snacks, and they could have the *brocha rishona* recited on them.

**On the Parsha ...** Yaakov said [ah you're a *malach*] I will not let you go unless you bless me [admit that the *brochos* are mine!]” He said “What is your name ..” Yaakov asked “What is your name?” He said “Why do you ask my name?” and he blessed him there [admitting the *brochos*]. [32:27-30] The *malach* would need to know the name of the person he blesses. Why did Yaakov need to know the name of the person giving the blessing? Why did the *malach* tell him he did not need to know it? This was not a fresh *brocha*. It was like *amein* on the *brochos* of Yitzchok. Yaakov wanted to be able to quote the *malach* of Eisav by name, saying that there was heavenly *ha'amanas devarim* for the *brochos*. The *malach* said this was not necessary. Since he was the lord of Eisav, his *ha'amanah* type *amein* would compel Eisav to say *amein* himself as acceptance of the deal, as he did: “My brother, let it be yours what is yours.” [33:9]

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