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In memory of their parents Dr. Irving & Mrs. Bernice Mehler & Mr. Gedalja & Mrs. Miriam Zupnik

לעילוי נשמת ר' יצחק מאיר בן אליהו ובריינא בת אברהם ע"ה ור' גדליה בן אברהם מנחם הכהן ומרים בת ישראל ע"ה

## Lechem Mishna on Shabbos

Rabbi Chaim Yeshaya Freeman

*How many of the loaves of lechem mishna need to be cut for the Shabbos meal?*

*Which bread must be covered during kiddush?*

**The requirement:** The Gemara (Brachos 39b) cites a teaching of Rav Abba that on Shabbos, during every meal, a person is required to break bread over *lechem mishna*, two loaves. This is based upon the verse (Shemos 16:22) that relates that a double portion of *mon* (manna) fell on Fridays: "It happened on the sixth day that they gathered a double portion of food." Hashem explained to Moshe that one portion was meant for Friday, and one for Shabbos, as no *mon* fell on Shabbos itself. Chazal inferred that two loaves of bread should be used to symbolize the double portion that fell in honor of Shabbos. The Gemara continues that Rav Ashi said that he witnessed Rav Kahana hold two loaves of bread on Shabbos but break only one. The Gemara in Shabbos (117b) elaborates that Rav Kahana said, in explanation of his action, that the aforementioned verse states that the Jewish People "gathered" a double portion, and so it suffices to have two loaves of bread at the meal without actually breaking both loaves.

The Gemara concludes with a practice of Rabi Zeira, but there is a dispute as to the understanding of this practice. Rashi (ibid. s.v. *batza*) explains that Rabi Zeira would break off a large piece of bread that would suffice for the entire Shabbos meal. Rashi continues that Rabi Zeira, by breaking off an unusually large piece of bread for the meal, was demonstrating how dear the Shabbos meal was to him. Ravina asked Rav Ashi that such a practice seems inappropriate as it displays gluttony. Rav Ashi replied that since Rabi Zeira did not do this during the week, but only on Shabbos, it is clear that he is not gluttonous but, rather, displaying his affection for the Shabbos meals. According to Rashi's approach, the practices of Rav Kahana and Rabi Zeira are unrelated and there is no *machlokes* (disagreement) between them.

The Rashba (Brachos 39b s.v. *Rabi Zeira*) disagrees with Rashi's approach and says that Rabi Zeira is arguing with Rav Kahana. The Rashba understands the Gemara to be saying that Rabi Zeira would break both loaves of bread on Shabbos, not just one. Ravina asked Rav Ashi that breaking both breads seems gluttonous, and Rav Ashi replied that since it is only done on Shabbos, it is clear that this is done in honor of Shabbos. The Rashba concludes by citing Rav Hai Gaon who writes that either practice - breaking both loaves or breaking only one - is acceptable.

The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 274:1,2) rules in accordance of Rashi's interpretation of the Gemara. Thus, one is obligated to take two loaves, but only needs to break one, as done by Rav Kahana. Also, one should break off a large piece of bread that would suffice for the entire meal following Rabi Zeira. However, the Mishna Berura (274:4) cites the Maharshal, Shelah and Gra who rule in accordance with the Rashba's interpretation of the Gemara and in accordance with Rabi Zeira that one should break both loaves at every meal.

The Mishna Berura concludes that the custom is to follow the Shulchan Aruch and only break one loaf. The Aruch Hashulchan (Orach Chaim 274:3) rules in accordance with the Shulchan Aruch and says that he does not understand the reasoning behind the other opinion. First, even if Rabi Zeira argues with Rav Kahana and requires breaking both loaves, the halacha should follow Rav Ashi and Rav Kahana to only require breaking one loaf, since they lived after Rabi Zeira, and the halacha generally follows the opinion of the later Amora (Talmudic sage). Second, the Aruch Hashulchan takes issue with the entire approach of the Rashba. He wonders why there be a requirement to break both

loaves if, as pointed out by Rav Kahana as the basis for his opinion, the Torah states that the Jewish People "gathered" a double portion.

**MidiOraysa or midiRabanan:** The Taz (Orach Chaim 678:2) says that *lechem mishna* is a *diOraysa* (Scriptural) obligation. The Taz is discussing a case of one who has limited finances and must choose between purchasing bread for *lechem mishna* or wine for kiddush. He rules that the *lechem mishna* takes precedence as the requirement of *lechem mishna* is *diOraysa*, while the requirement of wine for kiddush is Rabbinic. However, the Magen Avraham (618:10 and 254:23) argues that *lechem mishna* is a *diRabanan* (Rabbinic) obligation.

The Ran (Shabbos *dapei haRif* 44a s.v. *vikasav*) cites a *machlokes* among the Rishonim regarding whether women are obligated in *lechem mishna*. Rabbeinu Tam says that women are obligated since they also received a double portion of *mon* on Friday. The Ran writes that even without this reasoning, women must use *lechem Mishna*, since women are obligated in all the mitzvos of Shabbos, both positive and negative. This is based upon the Gemara (Brachos 20b) that points out that the first time the *Aseres Hadibros* (Ten Commandments) are stated in the Torah in the Book of Shemos, the verse says (Shemos 20:8) "*Zachor es yom haShabbos*," "Remember the Shabbos day." In the Book of Devarim, when the *Aseres Hadibros* are repeated, the verse states (Devarim 5:12) "*Shamor es yom haShabbos*," "Guard the Shabbos day." The Medrash, cited by Rashi (Devarim ibid. s.v. *shamor*), explains that both words were uttered simultaneously by Hashem (an impossible feat for a human). The Gemara (Brachos 20b) states, based on this, that anyone obligated in "guarding" the Shabbos - a reference to avoiding the forbidden activities of Shabbos - is obligated in "remembering," which refers to the positive activities one must do on Shabbos such as kiddush, three meals and *lechem mishna*. Thus, although women are generally exempt from time-bound positive mitzvos, since they are obligated to "guard" Shabbos and avoid all types of *melacha* (forbidden labor), they are also obligated to "remember" Shabbos as well.

It can be said that these Rishonim are arguing whether *lechem mishna* is a *diOraysa* or *diRabanan* obligation. The idea that women would be obligated in a time-bound mitzvah because "they, too were included" in the event or miracle upon which the mitzvah is based is found only in regards to time-bound *mitzvos midiRabanan* such as reading the Megillah on Purim and the Four Cups of the Seder (see Tosafos Megillah 4a s.v. *she'af*). The reasoning of "whomever is obligated in *shamor* is obligated in *zachor*" is a *diOraysa*-level reason applied to *mitzvos midiOraysa*.

Taking this idea a step further, the aforementioned *machlokes* seems to continue into a *machlokes* between the Mishna Berura and the Aruch Hashulchan regarding the practical halacha of this question. The Mishna Berura (274:1) rules that the reason women are obligated in *lechem mishna* is because they were included in the double portion of *mon*. This is in line with a different Mishna Berura (271:7) who cites a ruling of the Magen Avraham that the reason one should purchase bread over wine if one has limited finances is because one could make kiddush on bread, as well. The Shaar Hatziyun (271:11) points out that although the Taz writes the reason for the bread's precedence is because it is a *diOraysa* obligation, the Magen Avraham argues. Thus, since the obligation of *lechem mishna* is Rabbinic in nature, women can be obligated based on the

reason that they were included in the event.

However, the Aruch Hashulchan (Orach Chaim 274:1) writes that *lechem mishna* is a *diOraysa* obligation. This in line with what he writes later (Orach Chaim 274:4), that the reason women are obligated in *lechem mishna* is due to the fact that whoever is obligated to “guard” Shabbos is obligated to “remember” Shabbos.

**Miscellaneous laws regarding *lechem mishna*:** The *poskim* discuss the practical halachic relationship between *lechem mishna* and the *mon*. Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Shulchan Shlomo 274:1) is unsure whether one can borrow a loaf of bread for *lechem mishna* on the condition the bread will be returned after reciting *hamotzi* upon it. The *mon*, says Rabbi Auerbach, was fit to be eaten, while the bread, in such a case, cannot be consumed by the person using it for *lechem mishna*. However, the Tzitz Eliezer (11:23) is lenient and says that the bread does not have to replicate the *mon*. He proves this from the fact that people use different size breads, whereas the two portions of *mon* were a standard size, one *omer* per portion.

The Shevet Halevi (6:31) and Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Shulchan Shlomo 274:1) both say one should refrain from using frozen bread for *lechem mishna* due to its inedibility.

However, there are many *poskim* who disagree. Rabbi Betzalel Stern (Shu”t Betzel Hachochma 3:110) permits using frozen bread if it will thaw out prior to the end of the meal. The Minchas Yitzchak (9:42) is even more lenient as he permits it even if it will not thaw out prior to the end of the meal, since one could, in theory, place it near a heat source (in a permissible fashion based on the laws of Shabbos) to render it edible. The Tzitz Eliezer (14:40[3]) permits frozen bread based upon the aforementioned logic that the bread needn’t replicate the *mon*, and so inedible bread would be valid, as well. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (cited by Rabbi Simcha Bunim Cohen in *The Radiance of Shabbos* ch. 14 fn. 16) was also lenient.

A loaf is considered whole even if it has a split or crack, provided that when one lifts the bread by the weaker section, the loaf does not break in two (Mishna Berura 176:11). One may join two sections of bread which became separated with a toothpick or the like (Shulchan Aruch 168:2). A challa made of separate pieces that are attached but clearly meant to be separated (colloquially known as a “pull-apart challa”) may be used as two loaves when attached, and each section is valid even when separated from the whole unit (Shu”t Be’er Moshe 6:76).

**Covering the bread:** The Gemara (Pesachim 100b) cites a *beraisa* (non-Mishnaic Tannaic teaching) that one should not bring the bread-laden table prior to Kiddush. (In Talmudic times a tray-like table was brought with food upon it and placed upon legs before the diners.) If one did bring the table in prior to Kiddush, says the Gemara, a cloth should be spread over the bread prior to reciting kiddush. Tosafos (ibid. s.v. *she’ain*) asks that this ruling seems to contradict another passage in Shabbos (119b) that states that there are two angels, a good angel and a bad angel, that accompany a person home on Friday night. If the table is set and the house is prepared for Shabbos, the good angel gives a blessing that next week should see the same situation, and the bad angel is forced to respond *amein*. But if the table is not set and the house is not prepared for Shabbos the bad angel issues its wish that it this situation be repeated the following week, and the good angel is forced to respond *amein*. This passage indicates that the table is already set before the meal begins.

Tosafos answer that in Talmudic times, when there was an individual, smaller table for each person, the tables could be pre-set in a different location and brought in to the eating area following kiddush. Tosafos conclude that nowadays, when it is customary for everybody to eat together on a large table that is not really mobile, it is not feasible to bring the table out after kiddush. Therefore, it is our custom to set the table with challoos before kiddush, but to cover them

until after kiddush.

There are three reasons found in the Rishonim as to why the bread is to be covered. The Rashbam (Pesachim 100b s.v. *ein*) cites the She’iltos of Rav Achai Gaon that it shows that the food is brought for the honor of Shabbos, as it only is revealed following kiddush. Tosafos (ibid.) state that it symbolizes the *mon*, which, per the Torah’s description, was covered with a layer of dew on top and bottom. The Rosh (Pesachim 10:3) cites a passage in the Talmud Yerushalmi that it is meant to prevent the bread embarrassment, as the *bracha* over bread is normally supposed to precede the *bracha* over wine, since wheat and barley are mentioned before grapes in the verse which lists the seven species of *Eretz Yisrael*. (The order of precedence in the verse is the basis for what should receive a blessing first when the foods come simultaneously [see Brachos 41a].)

There are numerous practical differences between the different reasons; several common ones will be cited here. One practical difference is when the covering can be removed. According to the She’iltos, the cover should not be removed until after the entire kiddush is recited, since at that point it becomes apparent that the bread is brought in honor of Shabbos. According to Tosafos, the cover should remain on until after the *bracha* of *hamotzi* upon the *lechem mishna*, which is the point of commemoration of the *mon* (Aruch Hashulchan Orach Chaim 299:12). However, the Mishna Berura (271:41) cites a dissenting view of the Pri Megadim that even according to Tosafos’ reasoning, the challoos need remain covered only until after kiddush. According to the Talmud Yerushalmi’s approach, the cover can be removed after one recites the *bracha* over the wine.

Another difference is whether there is a requirement to cover the bread during all the meals of Shabbos. According to the She’iltos, one is only required to cover the bread at the onset of Shabbos during the Friday night meal, since it is then necessary to show that this food was not placed here for Friday use, but is rather specifically intended for the Shabbos meal. According to Tosafos, one is required cover the bread at all three meals. According to the Yerushalmi, one is only required to cover the bread on Friday night and Shabbos morning, when kiddush is recited over wine.

Another difference is in regards to what needs to be covered. According to the She’iltos, all food on the table, not just the bread, should be covered to show that all the food is meant to honor Shabbos. According to the Yerushalmi, only items that are made from grain and would thus be “embarrassed” at being passed over in favor of the kiddush wine need to be covered. According to Tosafos, only the *lechem mishna* itself, which represents the *mon*, needs to be covered.

Another difference is when one makes kiddush for a number of people who have bread or cake at their seats. According to the She’iltos, all food on the table, not just the bread, should be covered to show that all the food is meant to honor Shabbos – but, as mentioned previously, only on Friday night. According to Tosafos, only bread being used for *hamotzi* need be covered. According to the Yerushalmi, only someone who intends to drink the wine of kiddush (and is thus preceding the wine to the bread/cake) is required to cover the bread or cake at his place (Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchasa 2:47 fn. 125, citing Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach). However, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe Orach Chaim 5:20:18) rules that anyone fulfilling their obligation of kiddush by listening to its recitation must cover the bread/cake at their place.

The Aruch Hashulchan (Orach Chaim 299:14) concludes that the main reason is that of the Yerushalmi. Therefore, says the Aruch Hashulchan, one does not need to cover the bread at the third Shabbos meal, since there is no wine. However, he writes that since according to Tosafos the cover should remain until after the *hamotzi* blessing, one should do so since this is something easily done.

The three meals of Shabbos are a highlight of our day of rest and an important mitzvah. Properly fulfilling the mitzvah of *lechem mishna* is an important facet of these meals.

## ***Points to Ponder:***

***What should one do if he does not have two loaves of bread for lechem mishna?***

***Is it preferable for every person at the meal to have his/her own lechem mishna?***

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