



THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

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These halachos were shown by Rabbi Ostroff to **HaGaon HaRau Moshe Sternbuch, shlita**



Parshas Lech Lecha 5769

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Hilchos B'rachos part XIV

Which Bread First?

“On which item should the *b'racha* be recited?” is an important sector of *Hilchos B'rachos*.

For example, we are familiar with the concept of *Shiva Minim* (seven species) versus regular fruit, where in most cases the *shiva minim* take precedence and one recites a *boreh p'ri bo'eitz* on the pomegranate and not on the apple.¹

We find a similar concept relating to on which bread we recite *hamotzi* when faced with several types of bread.

What difference does it make?

When one intends eating two types of bread or more, one recites *hamotzi* on the most important one.² A *b'racha* should *l'chatchila* always be recited on the most important item, as a *hidur mitzvah* – to perform the mitzvah (in this case the *b'racha*) in the most beautiful manner possible.³

What is the order of importance?

The *Mishna Berura* cites the order as follows:
Seven species – Whole – Clean – Big.

¹ *Siman* 211:1.

² See *siman* 168:1.

³ *MB siman* 168:1.

Seven Species –

היטה ושעורה – wheat and barley are specifically mentioned in the torah and precede the other three grains, namely כוסמין, שיפון ושיבולת שועל which are generally translated as spelt, rye and oats and are not specifically mentioned.

Wheat bread has precedent over barley bread, and these two have precedent over the other three.⁴

The table looks like this:

Wheat > barley/ spelt/ rye/ oats
Barley > spelt/ rye/ oats
Spelt > rye/ oats
Rye > oats

What if I want to eat rye bread and not the wheat bread?

Recite the *b'racha* on rye bread, because when you do not intend eating one of the breads it does not enter the equation.⁵ You need not eat the more important item just because of the *b'racha*.

Whole versus slice

A whole loaf of bread has precedent over a slice of bread,⁶ even if the slice of bread is larger than the whole bread. Consequently, one should recite the *b'racha* over a whole

⁴ See *siman* 168 *se'if* 1 and 4. In *se'if* 4 and MB 13 it says spelt>rye/oats. Rye>oats.

⁵ *Rama siman* 168:1.

⁶ *Siman* 168:1 and *M" B* 1-2.

roll (bun) even when it is small, rather than reciting *hamotzi* over a large, sliced challa. ⁷

What if the sliced bread is purer than the whole bread?

Purer meaning finer wheat or better sifted. Even in such an event, one recites the *b'racha* over the whole bread. Whole wheat bread is less fine than pure white flour, and consequently one recites *hamotzi* over a whole wheat roll and not on sliced white bread.

Large

Size is also a factor but of lesser importance. When faced with two loaves or slices of similar quality, one recites *hamotzi* over the larger one. ⁸

Cleaner or whiter flour precedes size, and therefore one recites *hamotzi* on a smaller slice of white bread and not on larger dark bread.

What is the relationship between size, clean and whole?

The equation is **whole > clean > size**. ⁹

A whole brown pita has precedent over a pure white slice of challa, but only if one intends on consuming both. If one only wants to eat the challa, one recites the *b'racha* on the slice of challa.

What if you took a slice of bread into your hand before you began the b'racha and a whole bun is then placed on the table?

In such a case one takes the whole bun together with the slice and recites the *b'racha*

on both. ¹⁰ If one already recited the *b'racha* on the slice and then the bun was placed on the table, one first eats the slice on which the *b'racha* was recited.

The *Mishna Berura* does not discuss a case where the whole bun was placed on the table **during** the recital of the *b'racha*, but it would seem that in such a case one does not take the bun..

Vort on the Parsha

Avraham Avinu was told by *Hashem* to go to a foreign place, and this command is listed as one of the *nisyonos*. The question is that Avraham was promised many worldly rewards for this move (as evident from *Rashi*), so where was the huge *nisayon*?

The Slonimer Rebbe points us in the direction of the *Ran* who says in his *d'rashos* that the *nisayon* of *Akeidas Yitzchak* was the in the words **קָה נָא**, **please** sacrifice your son; you do not **have** to. It was Avraham's choice to do so to fulfill Hashem's will even though he was not commanded to do so. The *possuk* וילך אברהם כאשר דבר אליו ה' seems superfluous because we are told later that Avram went with his wife and nephew. The Slonimer Rebbe explains that this *possuk* is telling us that Avram went because *Hashem* told him to go and not for all the worldly pleasures he was promised. To totally dismiss the promises and to fulfill *Hashem's* command without any trace of personal gain is the *nisayon*. This *nisayon*, says the Rebbe, is greater than Ur Kasdim, the furnace of Kasdim.

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לזכר נשמת חנה בת ברוך

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *Siman* 168:2.

⁹ *M" B siman* 168:15.

¹⁰ *M" B siman* 168:1.

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If you would like to send a question to Rav Ostroff, you can write to him at shabbosweekly@shemayisrael.com.

Note: The purpose of this series is intended solely for the clarification of the topics discussed and not to render halachic decisions. It is intended to heighten everyone's awareness of important practical questions which do arise on this topic. One must consult with a proper halachic authority in order to receive p'sak.