

HALOCHOSCOPE

This week's question:

Can pancakes ever be considered a type of bread? Is there any difference between a freshly made batter and a mix with water added to reconstitute it?

The issues:

- A) Foods that are *hamotzie* or *mezonos*
- B) *Tzuras hapas*, the shape or form of bread
- C) Cooked items; *belilah racah*, thin batters
- D) Manners of preparation; reconstituting

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A) *Mezonos* and *Hamotzie*

Foods produced from the five bread grains can have two different *brochos*. As a bread staple their *brocha* is *Hamotzie*. As a baked sweet or cooked in water, their *brocha* is *Borei Minei Mezonos*. [Whole grains, toasted or cooked, are *Borei Peri Ha'adama*. Raw flour is *Shehakol*.] The *brochos* reflect their universality. *Mezonos* means filling food. *Hamotzie* praises the creation of bread. A staple is the main starch in a meal. The easiest of these is bread. Once baked it is ready to eat at any time, satisfies in relatively small amounts, requires no utensils, goes with most supplements, transports easily and keeps well. Hashem created bread grains for bread. This intended benefit, the *brocha* acknowledges – 'He Who brings forth bread from the Earth.' Bread is *soaid*, sustaining.

Sweetened bread, including dough made with liquids other than water, filled pies and pastries, or nibbling, cracker-type baked items are all possibly *soaid*. These are different types or meanings of the term *pas* ('bread') *haba'ah bekisnin*. They serve as convenient filling snacks. They do not function in the same way as bread in a meal. Therefore, their *brocha* is *borei minei mezonos*, 'He Who creates kinds of meal-foods.' If the item is used as a staple in place of the bread, it is considered bread and its *brocha* is *hamotzie*. Cooked foods made from the same grains are called *maasei kedaira*. They come from the same grains intended as bread. They have many of the satisfying and staple properties listed above, but lack some of the special qualities of bread. Therefore, their *brocha* is also *mezonos*, but can not be *hamotzie* even when they form the staple in a meal.

The main differences between bread and *pas haba'ah bekisnin* are: bread always has the *brocha hamotzie* even in small amounts; *bircas hamazon* is recited after eating a minimum of a *kezayis*, olive size; *netilas yadayim* is required before eating a *kezayis*, with a *brocha* if twice that amount is to be eaten. *Pas haba'ah bekisnin* only requires all this if it is used for *kvius seudah*, to substitute bread in a meal. [See Brochos 35a-38a, 31b-32a, Poskim. Tur, Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 168(esp.7), 208:2-9, commentaries.]

B) *Tzuras Hapas*

Another factor that affects a grain-food's *brocha* is whether it qualifies as *lechem* in

the first place. Non-*lechem* is always *mezonos*, even when used for a meal. To define *lechem* we often check the status of the food with regard to the *mitzvah* of *challah*, removing a dough tithe for the *kohain*. *Challah* applies to ***lechem ha'aretz***. We assume that anything not qualifying for *challah* is not a *hamotzie* food. [Two major exceptions to this rule are: a) a rabbinical *challah* obligation. This food could never have *hamotzie* recited on it; b) the dough form could later be baked as *lechem*, or might be cooked as *maasei kedaira*. *Challah* sometimes applies to the dough form.] The determining factors for *challah* and consequently, *hamotzie*, include *tzuras hapas*, form of bread, *blilah*, consistency of the dough or batter, and the manner of baking.

The Talmud mentions *Tzuras hapas* (*toar lechem, turisa denahama*) in regard to bread that is later cooked. If it retains the appearance of bread its *brocha* is *hamotzie*. Usually, this applies to pieces larger than a *kezayis*, or to a mixture with one or more such pieces. The poskim draw on this to explain other phenomena. *Truknin*, also known as *kuva de'ar'a*, does not require *hamotzie* as a snack. Some say this is bread baked in a hole in the ground. It lacks true *tzuras hapas*, but has enough of it to be used for *kvius seuda*. Others say it is loose batter baked in a hole in the oven. Some small snacking baked goods are not considered *tzuras hapas* by the poskim. They are too low quality to be used for *kvius seuda* either.

According to many poskim, thin batter is not made to be used as a staple, but as a snack or *maase kedaira* type food. Some *blilos* are so thin that they will never require *challah* or *hamotzie*, even when oven-baked. *Blilos* thick enough for *challah*, baked in some fashion, are considered real *lechem* by many poskim.

The manner of baking shows whether it is baked as bread, snack or *maase kedaira*. The Talmud debates *maase ilfas*, casserole-baked bread, placed in a pot with no water, but maybe a small amount of oil. Most poskim conclude that it is considered bread.

Lechem he'asuy lekutach is baked in the sun to be broken up small and eaten with sauce (like cereal, which is dried rather than baked). It is not considered serious bread. If the loaves are carefully shaped before being sun-baked there is at least a Rabbinical *challah* obligation. [See Brachos 37b-38a, 41b-42a, Pesachim 37a-38a, Challah 1:5, Poskim. Rambam Brochos 3:9. Tur, Sh. Ar. O.C. 168, commentaries. Halochoscope IV:19.]

C) Cooked items, baked items, either or both; belilah racah

Thus far, it would seem that items that are not baked can not get *tzuras hapas*. This includes *maase kedaira* and also items that are fried or boiled in a shape. If a small amount of oil is used, the item is considered baked. Dough might be made to be used for a non-baking process, but have the consistency of baking dough. The *challah* obligation of this mixture is the subject of a debate among the poskim. The debate applies to the obligation at the time of mixing and if one changed his mind later to bake it. The Mishna states that if the intention at the time of mixing was to bake it, or if it was to cook it but it was later baked, *challah* is taken. If both the intention and result were cooking it, it does not require *challah* to be separated. One explanation for 'cooking' is a loose batter. According to this view, any thick batter, even if it was later cooked, requires *Challah*. Accordingly, its *brocha* is *hamotzie*. However, if the dough is cooked in a way that the pieces do not have *tzuras hapas*, the *brocha* is *mezonos*. The other view is that cooking refers to the using a heated liquid to prepare it.

Noodles (called '*vermices*', '*vermizeli*', '*vermzlich*', '*litria*' or '*iltriah*') raise this issue. This is made of a thick dough. It is then dried thoroughly, or partially dried and sealed to stay fresh. Later, it is usually cooked. Some poskim had the practice to avoid eating cooked noodles without a bread meal. However, others point out that even the stringent view exempted these from *hamotzie*, while requiring *challah*. They do not have *tzuras hapas*. There is a minority view that this stringent view would not even require *challah*.

The consensus of the Poskim is to follow the lenient view. Therefore, anything cooked in liquids has the *brocha mezonos*. Nonetheless, the prevailing practice is to separate *challah* from such doughs, without reciting the *brocha*. [If the item has *tzuras hapas*, such as kreplach made with unsweetened dough, filled and cooked, one should only eat it as part of a bread meal.] One who has in mind to bake part of the dough must separate *challah* from the entire batch. Therefore, one could make sure to have this intention to make it a definite obligation. Some say that one must first bake the small amount, while others recommend separating the *challah* before baking it. A Jewish noodle manufacturer could separate *challah* because invariably some of the batch will be baked. (note: Separation of *challah* when dough is manufactured to sell retail raises other issues.) [See Brochos, Pesachim, as above etc., Challah 1:4-5, Poskim Tur, Sh. Ar. Y.D. 329:1-4, 8, O.C. 168:13, commentaries. Minchas Yitzchok VIII:108. Hakashrus 14:note 31.]

D) Types of preparation

We have mentioned *maase ilfas*, the 'casserole-baked' bread. This is baked in a pot, but without a liquid medium. A minimal amount of oil is used to prevent sticking. This is considered bread and its *brocha* is *hamotzie*. Pancakes are 'baked' in a pan over a flame, with a minimal amount of oil to prevent sticking. If they are cooked in enough oil to be considered fried, the poskim consider them cooked. Frying is really somewhere in-between cooking and baking, but for *pas* purposes it is considered a liquid medium. In reality, it is the hot oil that processes the batter. With little or no oil, it resembles *maase ilfas*. Furthermore, pancakes are often made by pouring the batter right onto a hot surface, similar to hearth-baked bread, which is baked on hot stones. The Talmud also discusses *chararah*, a roll baked directly on hot coals. These are considered bread.

If oil was added to the dough to give it the taste of a fried item, some poskim say that it may be considered fried. The purpose of the oil is to help it stay unstuck and at the same time give the impression of deep-frying it. Pancakes do not usually have oil added to the batter. There might, however, be some butterfat added.

Batter used for pancakes literally pours. It is clearly a *belilah racah*. The question would be how to view the final product. Is it a thin batter that when baked assumes *tzuras hapas*? Or is the final product a *maase kedairah* type food? Is the batter so thin that the finished product could never attain *tzuras hapas*? In addition, if it is made fresh, water is not usually an ingredient. The main liquids are milk and perhaps eggs. Sugar and other flavors are added. Thus, it appears to have the basic qualities of *mezonos* food. When it is eaten with syrup, it has the appearance of a snack. Nonetheless, pancakes are served as the staple in meals, especially for breakfast. And what if they are eaten with more substantial foods like cheese?

This touches on a larger issue. Breakfast foods often resemble snacks. Yet breakfast is considered a meal. The Talmud actually discusses two morning meals: *pas shacharis*

and *seudas shacharis*. It is not considered healthy or normal to eat a proper meal early in the morning. *Pas shacharis* refers to eating a small amount right after *davening*. This is to sustain the person until *seudas shacharis*. *Seudas shacharis*, a meal, is eaten in late morning. It seems to be a regular substantial amount of food, complete with bread. There was no midday or afternoon meal [except *seuda shlishis* on *Shabbos*, which is additional by definition]. *Seudas shacharis* should sustain until the evening. Modern day breakfasts fits somewhere in-between. More than a bite or taste is eaten, but since the prevailing practice is to eat a large lunch, breakfast is not usually a full meal. It is eaten in a rush.

The Talmud refers to '*pas*' *shacharis*, clearly indicating that it would comprise bread. However, it is considered a bread snack. Its *brocha* is *hamotzie*, but one need not eat it in a *sukah*. Does this mean that a *mezonos* substitute would be considered *kvius seuda* by definition? Moreover, does this mean that only if one eats the amount that does not require a *sukah* – an egg-sized piece or less, is it considered a snack? This would be about two standard pancakes. Some poskim maintain that there is a universal standard for *kvius seuda*. Others maintain that it depends on the individual. Accordingly, one who always eats a small amount of cake for breakfast could be considered eating his morning meal. However, there seems to be a consensus of contemporary poskim to use a slightly different measure. If the 'breakfast' is eaten as a properly satisfying meal, it is a *seuda*. If it is eaten to tide one over to lunch, it is a snack.

If the batter is made with water to reconstitute the powdered milk, it would seem to become regular bread dough. *Sefaradic* custom is to recite *mezonos* on any sweetened or otherwise flavored bread. *Ashkenazic* custom considers it bread unless the majority of the liquid content is not water. Many contemporary poskim consider the water content used to reconstitute fruit juice as water, rather than juice. The same would apply to milk powder. Accordingly, for an *Ashkenazi* Jew, it would be prudent to ensure that the batter is very loose, and even better to avoid eating these outside a bread meal. [See refs to earlier sections. *Shabbos* 10a *Psachim* 12b *Sukah* 26a 27a *Baba Metziah* 107b, *Poskim*. *Tur Sh Ar OC* 155:2 157 168:13, commentaries. *Vezos Habracha* p. 29 225 304/11:7.]

In conclusion, when eating freshly mixed pancakes as a light breakfast, *mezonos* is the correct *brocha*. When the batter is reconstituted with water, or when eaten as a filling meal, one should eat them with bread. If they were fried in oil, their *brocha* is *mezonos*.

On the Parsha and ten she-asses carrying grain and bread and 'mazon' for his father for the journey .. [45:23]. The commentaries say *mazon* refers to accompanying foods, non-breads, or to foods that satisfy. [See *Rashi*, *Ibn Ezra*, *Haamek Davar*] Perhaps the three types of food were for three situations on the road. The grain was to feed the animals. The bread was for regular meals. The *mazon* [*mezonos*] was for less formal meals, like breakfast. Alternatively, the bread was for quicker meals. The *mazon* [accompanying foods requiring preparation] were for formal meals. This is especially appropriate on a trip. By day, while traveling, it is hard to eat a normal meal. At night, while resting, one can prepare and eat a full meal. This helps define modern day breakfast. It is not formal. It is eaten in a hurry, and often eaten on the go. While real bread would inevitably be *hamotzie*, real pancakes eaten this way would be *mezonos*.



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