

TALMUDIC METHODOLOGY
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Shiur #11:
The Relationship Between the *Mitzva* of *Matza* and the Meal of the Holiday

The night of Pesach mandates two different halakhic obligations. First, we are obligated to eat a meal, just as we must partake in a meal during every holiday and Shabbat. Although this meal typically revolves around bread, on Pesach it is pivoted around *matza* instead. Our second obligation demands the ingestion of a *ke-zayit*, an olive's worth, of *matza*. This is an obligation even without the broader framework of a festive meal.

Are these two obligations integrated at all? By demanding a *ke-zayit* of *matza*, is the Torah shaping a different form of *Yom Tov* meal? Or should we view these two independent obligations as merely convergent? Perhaps we are simply commanded to conduct both a festival meal as well as partake of *matza* as the bread of affliction on the same evening. The answer to this fundamental question regarding the nature of these obligations may in turn affect several subsidiary issues.

Perhaps the most intriguing issue affected by this discussion concerns the number of mandated *matzot* for the twin blessings of *ha-motzi* and *al akhilat matza*. It is clear that at least two *matzot* are necessary for *lechem mishna*, as is standard for any *Shabbat* or holiday. But the *gemara* (*Pesachim* 115b and *Berakhot* 39b) establishes that the theme of *lechem oni*, "poor man's bread," requires the *matza* to be broken or cracked bread. How does this adjustment affect the standard rule of *lechem mishna*? Is the requirement of *lechem oni* an addition to the standard of two complete *lechem mishna*, thereby requiring a total of three *matzot*? Or does this condition qualify the type of *lechem mishna* demanded, yielding a total of two *matzot* for *lechem mishna*, one of which should be broken to signify *lechem oni*?

This issue was debated by the *Geonim* and *Rishonim*. The Rif, in his comments to the aforementioned *gemara* in *Pesachim*, popularized the position that only two *matzot* are necessary, with one of them being a broken *matza*. (Our *minhagim* suggest breaking the *matza* at the beginning of the *seder* during the

stage known as *yachatz*, but many *Rishonim* envisioned a *seder* which began with a broken matza). In contrast, the Rosh claimed that the *lechem oni*, broken bread, concept cannot affect the integrity of *lechem mishna*. He argued that the broken *matza* is demanded *in addition* to the standard, complete *lechem mishna*.

This debate may revolve around the level of integration between the *mitzva* of *matza* and the general festival meal. Presumably, the Rosh claimed that the two obligations remain independent of one another. Thus, the typical, two complete "breads" are necessary in order to fulfill the standard holiday obligation, while a separate broken *matza* facilitates the unique and independent *mitzva* of *matza*. The Rif, however, argued this point; by demanding *matza*, and broken *matza* at that, the Torah reshapes the holiday meal. The entire meal should reflect the theme of *lechem oni*. Therefore, the standard two complete breads should be replaced by at least one broken bread. Although our *minhag* follows the position of the Rosh, this is simply because it affords us the luxury of fulfilling each view.

A second but related question concerns the distribution of the two blessings of *ha-motzi* and *al akhilat matza*. Should they be recited upon the same *matza* or should the two blessings be distributed upon different *matzot*? This issue is debated by Tosafot in *Berakhot* (39b), who initially claim that the two *berakhot* should not be recited upon one *matza*. They argue that this would violate the principle of "*ein osin mitzvot chavilot chavilot*" - we do not perform multiple *mitzvot* upon a single item. By reciting two *berakhot* upon the same *matza*, two *mitzvot*, as well as their respective blessings, are converging upon the same *matza*. After considering this option, Tosafot concede that the two *berakhot* may be recited upon the broken *matza*, citing Rabbeinu Menachem of Vienna as an authority who employed this method. In defending the allowance of the recitation of the two *berakhot* upon one *matza*, Tosafot posit that the *berakha* of *ha-motzi* is a *birkat ha-nehenin*, a blessing said when receiving pleasure or benefit, and therefore does not violate the "*chavilot chavilot*" condition by adding an extra *birkat ha-mitzva*, a blessing made upon performance of a mitzvah, upon the same item. Tosafot cite the precedent of *Kiddush*, whereby two *berakhot*, "*borei peri ha-gafen*" and "*mekadesh ha-Shabbat*" are recited upon one cup of wine without violating the caveat of "*chavilot chavilot*." This principle would only be violated if two *berakhot* of *mitzva* were made on the same object.

Even if we were to conclude that any two *berakhot* made upon the same object would constitute a *chavilot chavilot* problem, despite the fact that one was a *birkat ha-nehenin*, it is still possible to refute Tosafot's initial position. Reciting *ha-motzi* to launch the meal of the chag along with the *birkat ha-mitzva* of *al achilat matza* upon the special *mitzva* of eating matza does not violate the concern of *chavilot chavilot* since the two activities are integrated into one "halakhic experience." The concern of *chavilot chavilot* emerges when two separate *mitzvot* are performed on one item; this compression of two *mitzvot* is evidenced by the recitation of two *berakhot*. However, in the instance where *ha-*

motzi and *al achilat matza* are recited upon the same *matza*, only one compound *mitzva* is being performed with the lone *matza*. No violation of *chavilot chavilot* occurs.

A third issue which reflects the structure of the two experiences is the amount of *matza* that must be eaten. The *gemara* repeatedly speaks of a *ke-zayit* of *matza*, the standard *shiur*, or measurement, for any halakhic act of eating. In *siman 472*, the *Shulchan Arukh* demands the ingestion of two *ke-zeitot* (plural for *ke-zayit*), without citing any source for this position. Presumably the *Shulchan Arukh* discerns two separate *mitzvot*, each demanding an independent *ke-zayit*.

However, the position of the *Shulchan Arukh* can be disputed in two distinct ways. First, even if the two *mitzvot* are truly independent of one another, the *mitzva* of launching a holiday meal with *ha-motzi* may not require the ingestion of a *ke-zayit*; merely a taste may be sufficient for such purposes. In fact, the *Mishna Berura* (*se'if katan* 9) argues this point. From this perspective, eating a *ke-zayit* plus an additional scrap would be sufficient.

Alternatively, even if the holiday meal *does* require an actual *ke-zayit*, perhaps the *ke-zayit* of the meal can also function as the *ke-zayit* of the *mitzva* of *matza*. Since the two *mitzvot* are one integrated experience, only one *ke-zayit* is necessary. The Torah reshaped the holiday meal by demanding *matza* consumption, thereby establishing that one, single *ke-zayit* fulfills both obligations.

Summary:

On the night of Pesach we face dual obligations. We must ingest a quantity of *matza* to recall our suffering in Egypt and our quick redemption. In addition, we must conduct a typical holiday meal. Are these two obligations parallel or integrated? By exploring the relationship between the two obligations, we may determine the number of *matzot* required, the distribution of their respective blessings, and the volume of *matza* which must be eaten.

Finally, this question may impact upon the manner in which we eat the "second" *ke-zayit*. Based upon the position of the *Shulchan Arukh*, we try to consume two *ke-zeitot* of *matza*. Must the second *ke-zayit* (not necessary chronologically but logically) be eaten with the standard conditions of *matza*? For example, must the *ke-zayit* necessary to fulfill the requirements of a standard meal be eaten while reclining in the posture of *heseiba*, a condition mandatory for the *mitzva* of *matza*?

Assuming that the two *mitzvot* are separate experiences, the conditions governing the *mitzva* of *matza* should not affect the experience of eating *matza* as part of the holiday meal. Even if *heseiba* is an ideal posture for every experience of the night of Pesach, its omission should certainly not obligate a

repetition of the eating. In contrast, if the *mitzva* of *matza* is integrated with the overall *mitzva* of eating a meal, we should then apply the same conditions of *heseiba* to the *matza* eaten in order to launch the festival meal.

The *Shulchan Arukh* appears to demand *heseiba* for each of the two required *ke-zeitot*, while others allow the *ke-zayit* of the meal to be eaten without *heseiba*. This creates an interesting enigma in our explanation of the position of the *Shulchan Arukh*. By demanding two *ke-zeitot*, he implies lack of integration between the two *mitzvot*. By demanding *heseiba* for each *ke-zayit*, he suggests integration. Evidently, one of our proposed theories is not acceptable to the *Shulchan Arukh*.

Another question surrounds the type of *matza* to be eaten for the second *ke-zayit*, that of the meal. The Maharal postulated that it is permissible to eat *matza ashira* (egg *matza* or *matza* prepared with other juices) on Pesach and that it is actually considered *matza*. However, since it possesses flavor, it cannot be deemed *lechem oni* and does not enable the fulfillment of the *mitzva* of eating *matza*. Can *matza ashira* be employed to fulfill the *mitzva* of eating a holiday meal? Again, if the *mitzvot* are distinct, none of the conditions governing the *mitzva* of *matza* should affect the experience of launching a festival meal. However, if the two *mitzvot* are integrated, we may demand *lechem oni* for the portion of *matza* eaten to begin the meal of the night of Pesach.