



# Daf HaKashrus

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## OU KOSHER HALACHA YOMIS ON CHANUKA

### WHICH COMES FIRST ON MOTZA'AI SHABBOS, CHANUKAH LIGHTS OR HAVDALLAH?

There is a dispute among the poskim concerning this question.

Normally, in selecting the sequence of two mitzvos we are guided by the principle of *tadir v'she'eino tadir – tadir kodem* (the more frequent mitzvah is performed first). As such, the Taz (681:1) rules that Havdallah is recited first because it is the more frequently performed mitzvah. The Biur Halacha (ibid.) quotes many achronim who agree with the Taz including the Maharal MiPrague, the Tosfos Yom Tov and the Pri Chodosh. This was also the custom of the Chazon Ish (Sefer Hilchos Chanukah, p.44 footnote 46). However, the Mechaber and the Rama (681:2), followed by the Magen Avraham, Eliyahu Raba and Gra (see Biur Halacha ibid.), maintain that Ner Chanukah comes first. Their rationale is that delaying the departure of Shabbos is more important than the principle of *tadir*. A second reason to prioritize Chanukah is that one performs *pirsumei nisa* (publicizing the miracle) with the kindling of the Chanukah lights.

In Shul, the accepted minhag is to light Chanukah lights first (Mishna Berura and Biur Halacha, ibid.). Possibly, this is because the great *pirsumei nisa* for an entire shul is very significant (see Aruch HaShulchan 681:2). At home one should follow his own minhag since there is a valid basis for both viewpoints (MB and BH, ibid.). If one has no *minhag*, he can choose what to do since both are valid *minhagim* (see end of Biur Halacha, ibid., in the name of the Pri Megodim).

It should be noted that one is prohibited from doing any *melachah* after Shabbos, even if Shabbos has concluded, until he recites *Ata Chonantanu* in *Shmoneh Esrei*. If he forgot to say *Ata Chonantanu*, he should say the words *baruch hamvdil bein kodesh l'chol* before lighting (MB 681:2).

### MAY I BAKE AND COOK WHILE THE NEIROS CHANUKAH ARE BURNING?

Women have a custom not to do *melacha* (physical labor; see below) while the Chanukah lights are burning (Mechaber O.C. 670:1). While there are places where the men also have this *minhag* (Mishna Berura 670:3) it is mainly practiced by women. The reason for this is that women in particular benefited from the defeat of the enemy since they were released from an evil decree which specifically targeted women (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 139:3). In addition, the miracle of Chanukah came through the hands of Yehudis, the daughter of Yochanan the Kohen Gadol, who killed the evil Greek governor and caused his troops to panic and flee (Rama 670:2 and MB ibid).



# OU KOSHER HALACHA YOMIS ON PAS HABA'AH B'KISNIN

## I HAVE HEARD THAT THERE IS A MAJOR DISPUTE ABOUT THE MEANING OF "PAS HABA'AH B'KISNIN." WHAT DOES THIS TERM REFER TO?

The Gemara in Berachos (42a) establishes that the bracha for "*pas haba'ah b'kisnin*" is *borei minai mezonos*. The Rishonim (early decisors) offer different explanations for this term. The Shulchan Aruch (168:7) cites three opinions: Rabbeno Chananel says it refers to dough baked with a filling, such as a pie. Rambam maintains that it refers to dough made with a noticeable amount of honey, oil, milk or spices, such as cake. Rav Hai Gaon is of the opinion that it is an item with a cracker-like texture. The Shulchan Aruch rules that we

follow all three opinions, and as such, we recite *borei minai mezonos* on pies, cake and crackers. In the Halacha Yomis for the next few days, we will discuss different applications of this halacha.

## I HAVE SEEN SANDWICHES AND ROLLS LABELED "MEZONOS ROLLS." IS THE BRACHA ON THESE ROLLS REALLY MEZONOS?

As noted in the previous Halacha Yomis, the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 168:7) rules that the *bracha* on baked dough made with honey, oil, milk or spices is *borei minai mezonos*. How much spice or flavor must be added to the dough to render the *bracha mezonos* and not *hamotzi*? The Shulchan Aruch rules that a discernable taste is sufficient, and this position is followed by Sephardic Jewry. In contrast, the Rama rules that the flavor must be predominant, and this ruling is followed by Ashkenazic Jewry. The OU poskim, as well as many others, understand the Rama to mean that the *bracha* is *mezonos* only if the final product tastes like cake, and not like bread.

"Mezonos Rolls" are generally kneaded with fruit juice and water. Typically, they taste almost exactly like regular rolls. Rav Belsky and Rav Schachter both held that they are without question *hamotzi* for Ashkenazim. Even for Sephardim, the *bracha* may be *hamotzi*, since the fruit juice is often not discernable.

## DO YOU EVER RECITE BIRKAS HAMA ON CAKE OR CRACKERS?



The Gemara (Berachos 42) states, that if one eats an entire meal of an item that is considered "*pas haba'ah b'kisnin*" (see earlier Halacha Yomis for explanation of that term), the *bracha* on that food (e.g. crackers) would be *hamotzi* and one would recite *birkas hamazon*.

The Magen Avraham (O.C. 168:24) clarifies that one would say *hamotzi* in the following two instances: 1) If one ate only crackers, and consumed an amount that would suffice as a main meal (such as dinner) for an average person. 2) Alternatively, if one ate other foods (for example, herring along with the crackers), and together these foods are a full meal, one would recite *birkas hamazon*. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe O.C. 3:32) states that in the latter case, one must consume the amount of crackers equivalent to the normal amount of bread eaten at a meal. According to Rav Belsky zt"l, this would be the equivalent of two slices of bread.

## WHAT IS THE CORRECT BRACHA FOR PIZZA?

We learned previously that pies are one form of *pas haba'ah b'kisnin*, and the *bracha* is *mezonos*. Similarly, dough filled with jam (such as hamentaschen) is a classic example of *pas haba'ah b'kisnin*. The *bracha* on calzones and the like, filled with cheese or meat (known as "*pashtida*"

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in the language of the poskim), is not as clear. A fruit pie is a *mezonos* because it is a dessert item, while calzones are often intended to be the main meal and not dessert. Although the Taz (168:20) rules that the bracha on calzones is *mezonos*, the Shulchan Aruch (168:17), and Mishna Berura (168:94) rule that the bracha is *hamotzi*. However, the Biur Halacha states that many Achronim agree with the Taz, and if the calzone is clearly not meant as a main-meal type of food, the bracha is definitely *mezonos*. Rav Belsky zt"l said that it is unclear whether pizza is a snack or meal food, but noted that the general custom is to say *mezonos* when eating a small amount.

It should be noted that if the pizza dough is fully baked prior to adding the cheese (as is the case with some frozen pizzas) the bracha would be *hamotzi*. When the dough is baked alone, its status at that time is *hamotzi*, and that does not change when a filling is added.

**MELBA TOAST IS A TYPE OF CRACKER. AS PREVIOUSLY NOTED, CRACKERS ARE ONE FORM OF PAS HABA'AH B'KISNIN. SO THE BRACHA IS MEZONOS, RIGHT?**

Melba toast is produced by first baking loaves of bread. After the bread is baked, it is left to sit for two days to dry out. It is then thinly sliced, and subsequently toasted. Rav Belsky zt"l ruled that since the Melba toast



starts out as regular loaf of bread, it does not lose its *hamotzi* status by being baked into a cracker later on, even though the final product was intended to be a cracker from the outset.

**WE LEARNED PREVIOUSLY THAT IF ONE EATS AN ENTIRE MEAL OF AN ITEM THAT IS CONSIDERED PAS HABA'AH B'KISNIN, THE BRACHOS RECITED WOULD BE HAMOTZI AND BIRKAS HAMAZON. IS THE AMOUNT OF PAS HABA'AH B'KISNIN THAT WOULD MANDATE HAMOTZI THE SAME FOR EVERYONE?**

No. To require the bracha of *hamotzi* one must eat an amount, "*she'acheirim kov'im alav*" that other people normally eat for a main meal (Shulchan Aruch O.C. 168:6). The Biur Halacha (ibid) writes that "other people" refers to people of similar physical properties. Rabbi Belsky explains that this refers to people of the same age and build. While an adult might need to eat two or three slices of pizza in order to say *hamotzi*, a child might only need to eat one slice if that is a typical main-meal for a child that age.

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## CHANUKAH

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Many poskim say that only work such as sewing and laundry may not be done but

food preparation such as baking and cooking are permitted. Rav Belsky zt"l was of the opinion that the *minhag* includes work related to food preparation as well (Piskei Halacha, Vol. 1, p. 119). This opinion is shared by Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita (Shiurei Halacha Minhagei Chanukah p. 3 quoting Sefer Yimei Chanukah p. 39). His reasoning is that since this *minhag* is only practiced for the half hour the Chanukah lights are required to burn, it would only be apparent if there was a cessation of all physical labor during that short time period. Since we are only discussing a *minhag*, one who has no definite custom can rely on those who are lenient (Shiurei Halacha Minhagei Chanukah p.4).

### WHAT IS THE REASON THAT CHILDREN RECEIVE CHANUKAH GELT, SPECIAL MONETARY GIFTS ON CHANUKAH? WHY DO SOME HAVE A CUSTOM TO GIVE CHANUKAH GELT ONLY ON THE 5TH NIGHT OF CHANUKAH?

The word Chanukah is related to the word *chinuch* (education). The Greeks wanted to make us forget our holy Torah. When they were defeated, it was necessary to begin reeducating the Jewish people, especially the children. Monetary gifts were given to the children with the intention of strengthening their love of Torah. As a reminder of these past events it has become a tradition to give monetary gifts during Chanukah to our precious children (Sifsei Chaim, Moadim vol. 2, p.134 in the name of the Ponovizher Rav zt"l).

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l offered a slightly different explanation. Initially the *minhag* was to give a monetary gift to the child's rebbe on Chanukah because he played an integral role in the *chinuch* process. Subsequently, the custom evolved and the "delivery boy" was given a gift as well (Emes L'Yaakov Siman 670 in the footnote).

Rav Belsky zt"l related that Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l used to give money to his children on the fifth night of Chanukah (see Piskei Halacha Vol. 1 p. 120). Many choose the fifth night for Chanukah Gelt distribution since this night can never fall on Shabbos, when the distribution of money would be prohibited.

### WHAT SUBSTANCES MAY A CHANUKAH MENORAH CONSIST OF? DO I NEED A MENORAH OR CAN CANDLES BE CONNECTED DIRECTLY TO A SURFACE SUCH AS A LEDGE?

In the Kaf HaChaim (673:60) Rav Yaakov Chaim Sofer (1870 – 1939) listed fifteen common substances that may be used for a Chanukah Menorah. The top three are gold, silver and copper. Further down on the list we find non-metallic substances such as glass, wood and china. One should obtain a beautiful menorah, to the best of his ability (Mishna Berurah 673:28). Egg shells, hollowed out potatoes, lemons and other fruits and vegetables may not be used in place of an oil menorah as this degrades the mitzvah (Kaf HaChaim 673:61-62). All permitted substances must be able to stand on their own accord without being propped up (ibid 673:60).

Wax candles do not need to be placed into a menorah or other vessel. They may be connected to a surface such as a wall or a ledge (see Mishna Berurah 671:18).

### I AM A GUEST IN SOMEONE'S HOUSE FOR A FEW DAYS DURING CHANUKAH. HOW SHOULD I PERFORM THE MITZVAH OF LIGHTING NEIROS CHANUKAH?

It is preferable for a guest to light his own *neiros chanukah* (Mishna Berurah 677:3 and Shaar HaTziyon 677:10). However, it is also acceptable for one to fulfill the mitzvah by becoming a partner in his host's lighting. This is accomplished by contributing at least a *prutah* (a few pennies) to the host thereby acquiring a share in the oil or candles (Mechaber 677:1) and wicks (Kaf HaChaim 677:8 quoting the Shu"t HaRashba Siman 542). When giving the host the money, the guest should say, "I am giving you this money to acquire a share in the oil and the wicks of the Chanukah lights that you will kindle tonight [or all eight nights of Chanukah]. The host should respond "I am transferring to you, with the acceptance of this money, a portion of the Chanukah lights that I will kindle tonight [or all eight nights of Chanukah] (Kaf HaChaim 677:2).

The guest should stand close to the host during the *brochos* and have intention to fulfill his requirement by listening to the host's *brochos*, and the host should likewise intend that the guest fulfills his obligation with the host's *brochos* (Kaf HaChaim ibid and Mishna Berurah 677:4).