

❧ chapter one ❧

## ***Birchas Hamotzie* or *Birchas Mezonos*?**

(פתי הבית בכיסוד)

### **Reciting *Brachos*, Washing *Netilas Yodayim*, and *Bentching***

**C**hazal say that deriving pleasure from anything in this world prior to reciting a *bracha* is tantamount to deriving pleasure from *hekdesh* – consecrated items. This is because everything in this world belongs to Hashem, and therefore, one who derives pleasure from Hashem’s property prior to reciting a *bracha* is having unauthorized benefit from Hashem’s property, which is akin to having unauthorized benefit of *hekdesh*. Common sense would dictate that it is only fitting to acknowledge and thank the One who created the item prior to enjoying it. It is because of this, that in *Chazal’s* eyes, one who neglected to recite a *bracha* prior to having enjoyment from this world has committed a grave sin.<sup>1</sup> We therefore see how important it is to recite *brachos* prior to placing any food into one’s mouth. It need not be mentioned that saying the *proper bracha* is of utmost importance. *Chazal* advise that one go to a *talmid chacham* and learn *hilchos brachos* very well in order to avoid mistakenly saying the wrong *bracha*.<sup>2</sup> Studying the *halachos* will also

strengthen one’s overall adherence to saying *brachos* prior to placing any food into one’s mouth, until it eventually develops into a routine habit, for it will improve one’s awareness and appreciation of the underlying concept of reciting *brachos*.

This chapter is going to focus on one particular aspect of *hilchos brachos* that can use a bit of *chizuk*; determining which foods require a *birchas hamotzie*, instead of a *birchas mezonos*. Aside from the fact that these *halachos* are slightly complicated, this topic requires a bit more emphasis to be placed on it, for other reasons. This is because it is slightly more difficult to adhere to these *halachos* compared to some other areas in *hilchos brachos*, and this should compel us to place more of an effort to fulfill these *halachos* properly. Deciding whether to recite a *hamotzie* instead of a *mezonos* may encounter some influence and hindrance from the *Yetzer Hara* more than when one is required to say other *brachos*, since reciting a *hamotzie* is not the sole factor involved. Reciting a *hamotzie* on a food normally entails washing *netilas yodayim* and *bentching*, and thereby requires one to sit down and eat a normal meal, which contradicts the American style of ‘fast food’. However, one should not allow this to interfere

1. ע"י מסי' ברכות דף לה:.  
2. שם.

and influence oneself. One should bear in mind the severity of being neglectful and not washing one's hands when supposed to. Chazal list *netilas yodayim* as one of the three things that lead to poverty *chas veshalom* for those who are neglectful.<sup>3</sup> Ostensibly, in a more positive light, one who is meticulous and washes *netilas yodayim* when one is supposed to, merits a *segulah* to become rich.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the *Chinuch* writes that one who is scrupulous with the *halachos* of *birchas hamazon* has a guarantee that his *parnasah* will be prosperous in a respectable fashion.<sup>5</sup> We can therefore see how Chazal treated those who are meticulous in adhering to the concept of *brachos rishonos*, *netilas yodayim*, and *birchas hamazon*, and those who are unfortunately neglectful in this regard. It is therefore imperative that one learn *hilchos brachos*, and train oneself to have a constant awareness to recite all *brachos* in the proper situations, and may we merit that Hashem bestow on us all the positive *brachos* that Chazal mention.

### ***Birchas Hamotzie vs. Birchas Mezonos***

There are certain snack foods which Chazal term as *pas habo bikisnin*. One must recite a *birchas mezonos* prior to eating these snack foods. These snack foods are made from flour, are baked in an oven, and have the same texture as bread, and are therefore very similar to bread, as is implied by its name - *pas habo bikisnin*. Nevertheless, it is governed by a different set of *halachos*. Prior to eating bread, one must recite a *birchas hamotzie* even if one is going to eat only a small crumb. Conversely, on *pas habo bikisnin*, one only recites a *birchas hamotzie* if he plans on eating a much larger amount (as will be explained below). When one eats a smaller amount of *pas habo bikisnin*, he must recite a *birchas mezonos*. The essential distinction of the unique status of

bread which is elevated from the more general *bracha* of *mezonos*, and requires the more specific *bracha* of *hamotzie*, is due to its prominence as being the basic staple of a meal, while *pas habo bikisnin*, although being very similar, is normally eaten only as a snack. This generally means that foods that are made from flour of the five grains, are baked in an oven, have the same texture as bread, and are normally eaten as a meal, fall under the prominent category of bread, and one must recite a *birchas hamotzie* prior to eating them. However, if the food is eaten by most people as a snack, a *birchas mezonos* is generally recited, unless one eats an excessive amount of the food (which will be discussed in detail below).<sup>6</sup>

### ***Pas Habo Bikisnin***

There are three views mentioned in the *Rishonim*, each offering a different definition for *pas habo bikisnin*.

#### **Pie**

The first definition for *pas habo bikisnin* mentioned by some *Rishonim*, is dough that is formed into a pocket and filled with nuts or fruits, commonly known as a pie (e.g. cherry or blueberry pie). Since such items are generally eaten by most people as a snack, the *bracha* is *mezonos*.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Additional Halachos and Practical Applications Pertaining to Pies***

One recites a *mezonos* even if he only eats the crust of a pie without any of the pie filling. Even though the crust may contain the exact same ingredients as bread, nevertheless, since it was cooked together with the filling and it was prepared to be eaten as a snack and not as a meal, one is only required to recite a *mezonos*. One who only eats the filling, must

6. שו"ע אורח סי' קס"ח, ובמ"ב ס"ק כ"ג.  
7. ע"י שו"ע שם סעי' ז', ובמ"ב שם ס"ק כ"ג.

3. ע"י גמ' מס' שבת דף סב.  
4. ע"י זוהר פרי' לך לך דף פז.  
5. ע"י מנ"ח מצודה תל.

recite the appropriate *bracha* for that type of pie filling.<sup>8</sup>

In order for a pie to be considered *pas habo bikisnin*, the filling has to alter the taste of the crust significantly. However, if there is not enough filling for it to alter the taste of the crust (e.g. raisin *challah*), it is not considered *pas habo bikisnin*, and one is required to recite a *hamotzie* and *birchas hamazon* on it.<sup>9</sup> The *Shulchan Aruch* states that if a pie has a filling that is not a snack food (e.g. blueberry filling) but is in itself a meal item (e.g. meat or cheese), it is not considered *pas habo bikisnin* but regular bread with something on it, and consequently, one is required to recite a *hamotzie* prior to eating it. The *Taz*, however, seemingly disagrees and maintains that it is nevertheless considered *pas habo bikisnin* and one is therefore only required to recite a *mezonos* prior to eating it.<sup>10</sup> Some *poskim* recommend that one avoid eating these items, unless it is in the middle of a 'bread' meal.<sup>11</sup> The *Mishnah Berurah* writes that in reality there is no dispute and both opinions agree that it depends on what this item is normally made for. If the item is normally made to be eaten as a meal, one is required to recite a *hamotzie* and *birchas hamazon*. If the item is normally made to be eaten as a snack, one recites a *mezonos* and an *al hamichya*.<sup>12</sup>

Consequently, one is required to recite a *hamotzie* prior to eating a meat pie. However, mini frankfurters that are covered by a thin crust (i.e. franks in blankets) require a *mezonos*. Even though the 'filling' is a meal item (i.e. the frank), nevertheless, since it is clearly made to be eaten as a snack, it only requires a *mezonos*.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, a potato knish

only requires a *mezonos* since it is primarily eaten as a snack.<sup>14</sup>

## Cake

A second definition for *pas habo bikisnin* mentioned among some *Rishonim*, is dough that is sweetened [i.e. the flour is kneaded together with other sweet liquids (e.g. apple juice, honey, eggs, etc.), or flavoring (e.g. sugar, cocoa)], commonly known as cake. Due to its sweetness, it is normally eaten as a snack and not as part of a meal, and as a result, its *bracha* is *mezonos*.<sup>15</sup>

### Additional Halachos and Practical Applications Pertaining to Cake

There is a *machlokos haposkim* with regard to how much the dough has to be sweetened in order for it to be classified as *pas habo bikisnin*, rather than bread. The *Shulchan Aruch* is of the opinion that as long as the taste of the added sweetness is recognizable (ניכר) while one is eating the food, it is classified as *pas habo bikisnin* and one recites a *mezonos*. This is the *minhag* among the *Sephardim*.<sup>16</sup> The *Ashkenazim*, however, follow the opinion of the *Rema* who holds that for one to recite a *mezonos* on a food, the taste of the sweetness has to be significantly noticeable (עיקר) while eating the food, and that it should be more significant than the actual flour. One is therefore required to recite

14. בענין קניש יש לחקור אם רוב בני אדם אוכלים אותו לאכילת תענוג או לאכילת קבע והנה מצינו כמה וכמה אנשים שאוכלים אותו לארוחת צהרים ובכמה פעמים אוכלים אותו בלבד בלי דבר אחר וא"כ היה אפשר לומר שברכתו הוא המוציא, ואפשר שגם הם בכלל פשטידא שנוכר בסעי' י"ז שצריך לברך עליו המוציא אם נעשה לאכילת קבע כמבואר בבה"ל. אמנם אחר העיון יש לומר שברכתו מזוונות כמנהג העולם מפני שבימי חז"ל וגם היום בכמה ארצות אוכלים בעיקר שתי סעודות כדאמרינן בבקר ובערב תאכל לחם אבל בצהרים אין זה סעודה גמורה רק תענוג בעלמא ובאמריקה גם ארוחת בוקר אינה סעודה גמורה, וארוחת צהרים הגם שנחשב יותר מתענוג בעלמא אבל אינה כסעודה גמורה וא"כ צדוק המנהג שמברכים מזוונות עליו, ועוד אפי' את"ל שנחשב כסעודה גמורה מ"מ אין הקניש עיקר הסעודה כמו פת ואין שייך לחלופי לפת, ועוד יש מחלוקת בין הפוסקים אם העיסה טפל למלוי או כיון שהעיסה מוסף טעם אינו נק' טפל, עי' אנ"מ אור"ח ח"ד סי' מ"ג, ועי' באר משה סי' ס"א, ועי' מ"ב סי' קס"ח ס"ק מ"ה, וערוה"ש שם סעי' כ"ח, ע"כ אף אם פסקינן שעיסה אינו טפל למלוי לגבי ברכת מזוונות מ"מ קשה לומר שמתעם זה צריך לברך המוציא הגם שקובע סעודתו עליו מ"מ עיקר כוונת האוכל הוא למלוי ולא לעיסה.

15. שו"ע שם סעי' ז', ובמ"ב ס"ק כ"ט.

16. שו"ע שם ובמ"ב ס"ק ל', ועי' ערוה"ש מש"כ דאף המחבר מודה להרמ"א ע"ש, ועי' כף החיים שם.

8. מ"ב שם ס"ק כ"ז.

9. מ"ב שם ס"ק כ"ח, ועי' ס"ק ל"ג, ושעה"צ שם ס"ק כ"ח, ועי' פמ"ג מ"ז שם ס"ק ז'.

10. שו"ע שם סעי' י"ז, ועי' מג"א שם, אבן עי" ט"ז שם, ועי' ערוה"ש שם סעי' נ'.

11. עי' שו"ע הרב שם סעי' י', ועי' פתחי הלכה פ"ח הע' 19 בשם הגר"ש אלישב שליט"א.

12. עי' מ"ב שם ס"ק צ"ד, ועי' בה"ל שם.

13. ע"פ מ"ב, ובה"ל הנ"ל.

a *hamotzie* on egg or honey *challah*.<sup>17</sup> Everyone agrees that on standard cakes (e.g. sponge or marble cake) one should recite a *mezonos*.<sup>18</sup> Soft hot pretzels that are primarily made with apple juice (where the taste of the sweetness is significantly noticeable) require a *mezonos*. However, most soft hot pretzels are made with water and therefore require a *hamotzie*. This is because although it is eaten primarily as a snack, nevertheless, since it has the exact same ingredients as bread, it cannot be considered *pas habo bikisnin* just because its shape is formed differently than a standard roll.<sup>19</sup>

### Crackers

A third definition for *pas habo bikisnin* mentioned by some *Rishonim*, is dough that has been baked to the degree that it has become very dry, hard, and thin; a food that is commonly known as a cracker. Even though it is made from the exact same ingredients as bread, nevertheless, due to its appearance and texture, it is not eaten as a meal and only as a snack, and as a result, its *bracha* is *mezonos*.<sup>20</sup>

### Additional Halachos and Practical Applications Pertaining to Crackers

In order for an item to be considered *pas habo bikisnin* and fall under this third category, it has to have originally been made as a snack item. However, if it was originally baked as bread, and was only then baked again to the point that it became dry, hard, and thin, one is nevertheless required to recite a *hamotzie* prior

to eating it. Therefore, one who purchases bread and then places it in a toaster, is required to recite a *hamotzie* prior to eating it.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, one is required to recite a *hamotzie* prior to eating grilled cheese. With regard to Melba Toast, although the bread is primarily baked in order to be used as toast, nevertheless, the general custom is to recite a *hamotzie*, since after its original baking it had the status of regular bread. Furthermore, Melba Toast is most commonly used for a meal rather than as a snack, and therefore, the *bracha* on it is *hamotzie*. Consequently, as explained above, it cannot qualify as *pas habo bikisnin*.<sup>22</sup> One recites a *mezonos* on hard pretzels, breadsticks, and all standard crackers.<sup>23</sup> The custom among *Sephardim* is to recite a *mezonos* on *matzah* during the year, since it technically falls into this category of *pas habo bikisnin*. On *Pesach*, however, the *Sephardim* recite *hamotzie* on *matzah*, since the *Torah* considers it ‘the bread of the *Yom Tov*’. However, the *minhag* among the *Ashkenazim* is to recite *hamotzie* on *matzah* all year. This is because the general custom is to use *matzah* when eating a meal, and it is therefore considered a meal item and not a snack.<sup>24</sup> All agree that on *matzah* crackers one does not recite a *hamotzie* but a *mezonos*.<sup>25</sup>

### Kvias Seudah – Eating Pas Habo Bikisnin As a Meal

Earlier in this chapter, we alluded to the fact, that although one generally recites a *mezonos* prior to eating *pas habo bikisnin*, nevertheless, one who plans to eat an excessive amount has to recite *hamotzie*. The rationale for this *halacha* is based on the fact that *pas habo bikisnin* can only be considered a snack if it is treated as a snack. However, if

17. רמ"א שם, וע"י בדרכי משה שם, וע"י מ"ב ס"ק ל"ג.

18. ע"פ הני"ל, וכן הוא מנהג העולם.

19. ע"י ספ' מקור הברכה, וספ' וזאת הברכה שהראיך בענין זה, אם ברכותם המוציא או מזונות. ושמעתי מכמה גדולי הפוסקים דמי שפסק שהוא מזונות אינו אלא שגגה היא ביריה וע"י חוברת מסורה בגליון א בירורי הלכה בענין פת הבא בכיסנין מהגר"י בעלסקי שליט"א ושם מבואר דר"ע סוברים שצריך שינוי בבליעתו ובטעמו ואף לשדי חמד שכתב שהולכים בתר תכליתו, אם הוא לתענוג או לשביעה, מ"מ גם הוא מודה דבעינן לכה"פ שינוי בעצם צורת הפת בשעת אפיה, וכאן ליתא מזה לגמרי. ומה בכך שהוא נראת בצורת אחר מ"מ הפת עצמו אינו משונה כלום כגון כעכין יבישין שהוא יבש ודקות מאד ואיך שייך למימר שאם לקח פת שלם ועושה בצורת אחר שברכתו מזונות. וכך שמעתי מהרה"ג ר' ח.פ. שיינבערג שליט"א. וע"י שו"ע ס"י קס"ח סעי' ח משיב בענין לחמניות שברכתו המוציא אף שהוא קטנה מסתם פת כדמבואר במ"ב שם והיה לעניינינו.

20. ע"י שו"ע שם סעי' ז', ובמ"ב ס"ק ל"ה.

21. ע"י כף החיים שם ס"ק ל"ה.

22. ע"י חוברת מסורה הני"ל בבירורי הלכה בענין פת הבא בכיסנין מהגר"י בעלסקי שליט"א.

23. ע"פ מ"ב בס"ק ל"ה וכן עמא דבר.

24. ע"י שו"ת מהרש"ם ח"ב סי' י"ב, וע"י דעת תורה סי' קס"ח סעי' ז', וע"י מחזיק ברכה סי' קנ"ח אות ה', וע"י שו"ת יחיה דעת ח"ג סי' י"ב שהראיך בזה, אכן ע"י שו"ת ציץ אליעזר ח"א סי' י"ט, וע"י שו"ת מנחת יצחק ח"א סי' ע"א.

25. ע"י שו"ת הר צבי אור"ח סי' צ"א.

one were to eat an excessive amount of *pas habo bikisnin*, it cannot be considered a snack but a meal. Therefore, it would have the same status as bread which is usually eaten as a meal, and would require that *hamotzie* be recited prior to eating it.<sup>26</sup>

There are basically three manners in which one can eat *pas habo bikisnin* for it to be treated as a meal.

### 1. Eating *Pas Habo Bikisnin* Alone As a Big Snack

If one eats the *pas habo bikisnin* alone without any other side dishes, it can only qualify as a meal if one eats the amount that most people would eat if they were eating it as a meal. This means that one who eats enough *pas habo bikisnin* that would satiate most people just as they would be satiated by eating an entire regular meal, is required to *bentch*.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps an easy way to measure this amount, is by imagining how much bread most people would eat when eating a meal that consists only of bread. One should then substitute the *pas habo bikisnin* for the bread. The amount that most people would eat for such a meal warrants a *hamotzie* to be recited prior to eating it and *birchas hamazon* to be said afterwards. This prescribed amount is not dependent on the individual himself (i.e. the amount he would normally eat as a meal), but is dependent on the custom of most people who are his age and in his condition.<sup>28</sup>

Some *poskim* are even more stringent and maintain that as long as one plans to eat an amount of *pas habo bikisnin* that is equal to the volume of three or four eggs, he is required to recite a *hamotzie* and *bentch*. Although the general custom is in accordance with the more lenient opinion, nevertheless, the *Mishnah Berurah* advises that one should not eat more than the volume of three or four eggs of *pas*

*habo bikisnin*, so as not to place himself in a situation where it is questionable whether he is obligated to *bentch*.<sup>29</sup>

This *halacha* applies even if one was not planning to eat an excessive amount of food, and therefore initially recited a *mezonos*. Nevertheless, if he ended up eating an excessive amount, he is required to recite the complete *birchas hamazon* instead of *al hamichya*.<sup>30</sup>

### 2. Eating *Pas Habo Bikisnin* Together With Other Food

In the last category, we mentioned that unless one eats an excessive amount of *pas habo bikisnin*, one does not recite a *birchas hamotzie* nor *birchas hamazon*. However, this is only true if one is eating the *pas habo bikisnin* alone. If one were to eat the *pas habo bikisnin* together with other food, the required amount to warrant a *hamotzie* or *birchas hamazon* is much less. One who eats, along with some other food, the amount of *pas habo bikisnin* that is equivalent to the amount of bread that most people would normally eat if they were eating bread as part of a larger meal, must recite a *hamotzie* before the meal and *birchas hamazon* afterwards.<sup>31</sup>

However, this applies only if the *pas habo bikisnin* is eaten as the main part of the meal. If it is eaten merely as a dessert, it does not warrant a *hamotzie* or a *birchas hamazon*. The *pas habo bikisnin* can only be viewed as a snack, if after eating a full meal one decides to have a small piece of cake for desert. However, a problem that exists by many *kiddushim* and *smorgasbords*, is that people are served a full course meal together with many types of cookies, cakes, and crackers placed on the tables. Many people eat gefilte fish, kugel, cholent, and other dishes, together with several pieces of cake. In such an instance, the cake cannot be viewed as a

<sup>26</sup>. ע"י שרע שם סעי' ו'.

<sup>27</sup>. ע"י מ"ב שם ס"ק כ"ד, וע"י ב"י שהביא מחלוקת ראשונים אם צריך שיעור כמו שאחרים רגילים לקבוע עליו סעודה וע"ש שכן העיקר, וע"י עוד בערוה"ש בענין דעת הר"י"ף.

<sup>28</sup>. ע"י בה"ל שם, וע"י ציון 72 לעיל.

<sup>29</sup>. ע"י מ"ב ס"ק כ"ד, ע"י מ"ב ס"ק כ"ד.

<sup>30</sup>. ע"י שרע שם, ומ"ב ס"ק כ"ו.

<sup>31</sup>. ע"י מ"ב ס"ק כ"ד.

snack, but as part of the actual meal, and one is therefore obligated to recite *birchas hamazon* following such a *kiddush*. In addition, one who initially intends to eat such an amount is required to wash *al netilas yodayim* and recite a *hamotzie* prior to eating the cake. Therefore, in order to avoid these and several other problems that may be involved with eating such a *kiddush*, it is advisable for one to limit the amount of cake one eats and only eat a small piece before or after eating the other dishes. It is also advisable for the *ba'al simcha* to prepare *challah* rolls for all those who intend to wash and eat a full meal at the *kiddush*.<sup>32</sup>

### 3. Eating *Pas Habo Bikisnin* Alone As a Meal

This category is both similar to and different than the first two categories, which makes it a bit more complicated. It is similar to the first category, due to the fact that one is eating the *pas habo bikisnin* alone. However, the first category referred to a case where it was being eaten only as a *snack*, and it is in such a case that the *halacha* requires one to recite a *hamotzie* only if he planned on eating an amount that most people consider to be a meal by itself (even if he *himself* is not completely satiated). In this case, however, one is not eating it as a *snack* but as a meal. Additionally, he is completely *satiated* by eating a much smaller amount, and therefore the *halacha* requires him to *bentch* in certain instances, even on the much smaller amount.

The exact *halacha* is as follows. If one eats a small amount of *pas habo bikisnin* and is *satiated*, and this is an amount of food that most people would eat when it is accompanied by other foods (as explained in the second category), then although he is eating it alone, we consider it to be a *kvias seudah*. One is therefore required to wash and recite an *al netilas yodayim* and a *hamotzie* if he intends on eating such an amount, and he must

*bentch* afterwards. However, if one were to eat even less than this amount he would not recite a *hamotzie* or *bentch* afterwards even if he himself feels completely satiated.<sup>33</sup>

The logic behind this *halacha* is as follows. Although the general *halacha* is that we do not take into consideration the amount that a single individual would eat as a meal, nevertheless, to a certain extent, it is dependent on the individual as demonstrated by the *halacha* stated in the previous paragraph. The rationale behind this, is that since his behavior is not *totally* different from the custom of most people, since many people do eat the amount that he has eaten as part of a meal, albeit with other food. Therefore, as long as he is completely satiated by eating this small amount of *pas habo bikisnin*, albeit by itself, he is required to recite a *hamotzie* prior to eating it and *bentch* afterwards. This case is unlike the first case where the individual was eating the *pas habo bikisnin* as a *snack*, and his behavior is not taken into account since it is totally unlike the common eating habits of most people.

However, if one were to eat even less than the amount mentioned, he would not recite a *hamotzie* even if he himself feels completely satiated, since it is completely different from the normal eating habits for a meal.<sup>34</sup>

There are two items that are very questionable with regard to the *halachos* of *pas habo bikisnin*. These two items are: Pizza and *Mezonos* "Bread".

### Pizza

The custom of many people is to recite *mezonos* on pizza. This practice is very questionable.

Firstly, even if pizza is classified as *pas habo bikisnin*, nevertheless, when one eats *two* slices of pizza, he has eaten an amount that is

<sup>32</sup>. כך שמעתי מהגר"י בעלסקי שליט"א.

<sup>33</sup>. מ"ב שם ס"ק כ"ד.  
<sup>34</sup>. כן מוכרח מהמ"ב שם.

very close to the amount that is considered a *kvias seudah* based on the general eating habits of most people. This is true even if one does not personally feel satiated by two slices of pizza, since, as explained above, *kvias seudah* is not dependent on each individual, but on the general eating habits of most people.<sup>35</sup>

Additionally, one who eats *one* slice accompanied by other food (e.g. french-fries, knish, etc.) is also required to wash, since such an amount of pizza combined with the other items is considered a meal, based on the general eating habits of most people.<sup>36</sup>

Moreover, one who eats *one* slice alone and feels *completely* satiated (i.e. he is completely full and will therefore not eat another meal afterwards) is also required to *bentch*, since this is an amount that most people would eat together with other side dishes. Therefore, in a case where one slice is eaten and he is completely satiated, we do *not* say that he is acting completely different from the general custom, and he is therefore required to wash.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore, in all of the above cases one is required, according to all *poskim*, to wash, recite an *al netilas yodayim* and *hamotzie* (and *bentch* afterwards), if he initially intends to eat such an amount.

The above discussion is only applicable if pizza is considered *pas habo bikisnin* and is therefore subject to the laws of *kvias seudah*. However, this assumption is very questionable, for this would mean that most people treat and eat pizza as a snack (i.e. eat only one slice with either no other food or very little food accompanying it). (Additionally, this would mean that most people would still eat a decent sized lunch or supper shortly before or after eating pizza). This is because, as we have already explained throughout this chapter, the underlying reason for differentiating between

*pas habo bikisnin* and regular bread (where one is required to recite a *hamotzie* prior to eating even *one small bite*) is because most people eat bread for or together with a meal while *pas habo bikisnin* is eaten as a snack.<sup>38</sup>

Additionally, as mentioned above when discussing the category of pies, the filling of the pie has to be considered a snack item for the pie to be considered *pas habo bikisnin*. However, if the filling is cheese or meat, it is debatable whether the pie is classified as *pas habo bikisnin*. The *Mishnah Berurah* writes that if an item was made to be eaten as a snack (e.g. a mini frankfurter), one recites a *mezonos*, but if it was made to be eaten as a meal (e.g. a meat pie), one recites a *hamotzie*. Pizza falls into this category since it is covered with cheese, and it is therefore debatable whether it can even be considered *pas habo bikisnin*. (This is only true if the pizza is made with water. However, if the pizza is made with a significant and noticeable amount of apple juice, it would fall into the category of *pas habo bikisnin* which is dependent on the filling of the dough.) Therefore, one must seriously take into account what pizza is primarily eaten for.<sup>39</sup>

The assumption that most people eat pizza as a snack nowadays is very questionable. It was explained earlier that if the

38. ע"י ספר זאת הברכה שהביא מכמה גדולי פוסקים שברכתו הוא המוציא ומהם הגר"ש אויערבך וצוק"ל ויבלט"א הרה"ג ר' ח.פ. שיינבערג שליט"א. ושמעתי מהגר"י בעלסקי שליט"א ומהגר"ד פיינשטיין שליט"א שאם דרך העולם לקבוע סעודה על פיצא צריך לברך המוציא אף על כל שהוא, ע"פ משי"כ המ"ב בס"ק כ"ד, מ"מ שמעתי מהם שמי יאמר שזהו המציאות, והגר"י בעלסקי היה נוטה לומר שאין זה בודאי המציאות מפני שראינו כמה אנשים שאוכלים אותה עד שעה מאוחרת בלילה ולבאורה אוכלים אותה אחר שנגמר ואכל סעודה גמורה לארוחת הערב, ומאריך גיטא ראינו שהמוני אנשים אוכלים אותה בעד ארוחת צהריים וזה להם סעודה שלימה בכל יום ממש. ועי' חוברת מסורה מהOU בבירורי הלכה בענין פת הבא בכיסנין מהגר"י בעלסקי שליט"א וכתב שם שהנהג להן לבני ישראל שמברכים עליה במ"מ א"כ קבעו עליה. מ"מ שמעתי ממור"ר ה'ר' שמחה רוזנבלט שליט"א שכבר הרבה שנים שהוא בודק ושאל רבנים כדי לחפוש את המציאות של רוב בני אדם וברור לו שדרך רוב העולם לקבוע סעודותם על פיצא. וכן נראה שרוב העולם לא אוכלים סעודה שלימה בין לפני ובין לאחר אכילת פיצא. ועי' בציון הבאה משי"כ בשם הרה"ג ר' פייוול כהן שליט"א. וכתב לי הגר"א גרינבלאט שליט"א שהגם שהוא סבר שברכתו הוא המוציא אף על כ"ש מ"מ טוב לאכול ב' חתיכות שע"ז כו"ע מורה שצריך לברך המוציא.

39. שמעתי מהגר"י בעלסקי שליט"א שפיצא הוא שוה לפשטידא ותלוי במנהג העולם אם אוכלים את הפיצא לסעודת קבע או רק לתענוג בעלמא כמו שהראינו בציון 38. וגם שמעתי מהרה"ג ר' פייוול כהן שליט"א שפיצא דומה לפשטידא והוא סבר מפני שהמנהג העולם הוא לאכול אותו לסעודת קבע לפיכך ברכתו הוא המוציא אף על כל שהוא.

35. שמעתי בשם הגר"מ"פ צוק"ל ששיעור קביעות סעודה הוא ב' חתיכות

ויבלח"ט מהגר"י בעלסקי שליט"א שמעתי שהוא קרוב לזה.

36. כך שמעתי מכמה פוסקי זמנינו ע"פ משי"כ במ"ב ס"ק כ"ד.

37. כך שמעתי מכמה פוסקי זמנינו ע"פ משי"כ במ"ב ס"ק כ"ד.

general custom is to treat pizza as a meal item it would give it the same status as bread and one would therefore be required to recite a *hamotzie* even on one bite. One should honestly ask himself how he treats pizza and inquire from his friends whether they do eat a decent lunch or supper shortly before or after eating pizza. This question should be analyzed very seriously. Firstly, one is dealing with a *chiyuv Deoraisa to bentch*, and secondly, one is dealing with the very important issue of reciting the correct *bracha* prior to eating an item, as explained at the beginning of this chapter. One cannot jump to a conclusion that is influenced by one's laziness not to wash *al netilas yodayim* and *bentch*. One should remember what *Chazal* say with regard to the importance of washing and *bentching* mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

### Frozen Pizza

It is very important to mention that the entire preceding discussion of regular pizza may not be applicable to commercially produced frozen pizza. Many people are not aware that some commercial manufacturers produce frozen pizza differently than regular pizza. The pizza is first baked as regular dough comprised of flour and water. Only after the dough is completely baked, is the cheese, tomato sauce, and spices placed on it, and it is then placed into the freezer for it to become frozen. The first time that the cheese and the other additives get baked together with the dough, is when one bakes it at home prior to eating it. If it is manufactured in such a way, the frozen pizza definitely requires a *hamotzie*. This is because it originally was completely baked without any other additives and it had the status of regular bread. Therefore, as explained earlier in this chapter, it does not matter if other additives are placed on it afterwards and it is then baked again. Nevertheless, many local establishments that started to sell frozen pizza, freeze the actual ready-made pizza, and sell it as frozen pizza. Such pizza is subject to the same *halachos* that

apply to regular pizza, discussed in the previous paragraph.<sup>40</sup>

### Mezonos Bread

There is an item that is manufactured and sold on the market that looks like and tastes like bread, and is called "Mezonos Bread". This label implies that although it is actual bread, nevertheless, one only needs to recite a *mezonos* prior to eating it, and it therefore saves people from the big 'hassle' of washing and *bentching*. With this new discovery, one can now eat this bread for breakfast, lunch, and supper, on the run, and not waste any precious time washing and *bentching*. The store owners and bakeries who sell this "new bread" justify its label by saying that apple juice is added while preparing the dough, and that it is therefore different than the standard bread that is made from flour and water. However, this discovery has not met the approval of the greatest *poskim* of our generation. In their opinion, it is a complete fallacy.<sup>41</sup>

First of all, *mezonos* bread is used most of the time in place of bread and is eaten as a meal, sometimes together with other food and sometimes by itself, and it therefore cannot be considered *pas habo bikisnin*, but regular bread, as explained throughout this chapter. Moreover, even if it is not eaten by most people as a meal (which is not the case), nevertheless, in most instances one is required to wash and *bentch* since one fulfills one of the requirements of *kvias seudah* mentioned above.

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40. ע"י חוברת מסורה הנ"ל בבירורי הלכה בענין פת הבא בכיסנין מהגר"י בעלסקי שליט"א. מ"מ שמעתי מכמה מוכרי פיצא שאופים ומוכרים פיצא קפואה והם אמרו לי שעכשיו הם אופין את הפיצא קפואה ממש כמו שהם אופין את הפיצא הרגילה, מ"מ שמעתי מהגר"י בעלסקי שליט"א שלפני כמה שנים היה כולם אופין אותם כמו שכתבנו בפנים ועכשיו יש שאופין אותם כמו הפיצא הרגילה ויש כמו שכתבנו בפנים. ולפיכך כ"א צריך לבדוק ולשאול בעצמו קודם שאכלו. מ"מ כבר הראיכו לעיל שאולי אף על פיצא הרגילה צריכים אנו לברון עליו המוציא אף על כל שהוא.

41. ע"י חוברת מסורה הנ"ל בבירורי הלכה בענין פת הבא בכיסנין מהגר"י בעלסקי שליט"א. וע"י ספ' פתחי הלכה וכן פסק כמה וכמה מגדולי ישראל.



However, putting this entire discussion aside, it is by far much more questionable. This is because in order for it to be considered *pas habo bikisnin*, it has to be made differently than bread. The only difference there is between *mezonos* bread and regular bread, is the fact that apple juice (or any other juice) is added. However, as explained above, in order for it to be considered *pas habo bikisnin* according to the *Rema* and the *minhag* of the *Ashkenazim*, it must have a significant change of taste due to the apple juice. The apple juice would have to be more significant than the actual flour. This is definitely not the case, for if it would be the case, it would taste too sweet to be eaten as a meal, and would be considered cake. However, regarding most *mezonos* bread, the taste of the apple juice is barely noticeable, and it is therefore very questionable to consider it *pas habo bikisnin*, even according to the *shitah* of the *Mechaber*, which is the custom of the *Sephardim*.<sup>42</sup>

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42. יש שרוצים להביא מקור נאמן למנהגם לברך מזונות ממש"כ בדעת תורה סי' קס"ח שכתב בזה"ל ומש"כ השו"ע דהוא שיהי' טעם תערובות המי פירות או התבלין ניכר בהעיסה נ"ל דהיינו אם הוא רוב מים אבל ברוב מי פירות א"צ שירגש בהעיסה הטעם המי פירות עכ"ל מ"מ אינו שייך להביא שום סמך מזה, דרישת כל הוא ז"ל כיוון דבריו אך ורק על שיטת המחבר כמו שהוא ז"ל כתב בפירוש ולפיכך אין זה נוגע לאנו בני אשכנז שיוצאים ביד רמ"א, מ"מ אין זה כ"כ פשוט להביא סמך אף לספרדים שיברך מזונות, שהוא ז"ל כתב בכמה שורות למטה מזה בזה"ל דאם נילוש במשקה מהפירות עצמן ע"י סחיטה י"ל דהוי זיעה בעלמא עכ"ל וידוע שכל המי תפוחים בזמנינו נסחטים מהתפוחים, ולפיכך אף אם עירבבו מי תפוחים אלו בהעיסה לא מעלה ולא מוריד, ורק אם המי פירות הם מבושלים כמו שהוא ז"ל כתב שם שהאחרונים הראיכו בדין

The fact that 'mezonos' bread is served on an airplane where it is very difficult to wash, is not an excuse to compromise on this *halacha*. Therefore, one is required to wash, recite an *al netilas yodayim* and *hamotzie*, and *bentch*, on *mezonos* bread, falafel pita, and frankfurter buns.

A prominent *Rov* once asked the owner of a well-known reliable food establishment why he posts a sign stating that these aforementioned items are *mezonos*. The owner responded that he himself recites a *hamotzie* prior to eating them, but the people who buy the food are usually women and children who won't wash anyway. This is probably the best excuse that exists, yet it is still no reason to mislead the general public. Even if a prominent *Rov* gives a *hashgacha* on a certain establishment or item, this is by no means proof that he approves of reciting a *birchas mezonos* on these items. He is giving his certification only on the *kashrus* of the establishment or the item. This issue should be taken very seriously, and one should bear in mind the *brachos* that *Chazal* bestow on those who are scrupulous with regard to *hilchos brachos*.

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נילוש ביין צמוקים ובארשט וקוואס ע"ש. ועע' בט"ז ובמ"ב ומוכרח משם דאף אם הוא רוב מי פירות צריך להיות טעם התבלין נרגש יותר מטעם העיסה, וא"כ אין כאן שום היתר לברך על "לחמניות מזונות" ברכת מזונות וצריך לברך עליו המוציא.