



Parshas Bechukosai 5768

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## Hilchos Berachos

Various laws pertaining to **Hamotzi** on bread

### Why Hamotzi and not Ha'adamah?

Initially, bread should be *ha'adamah*, because wheat grows in the ground, and indeed when eating roasted wheat one recites *ha'adamah*, but because bread is central in one's diet, as it says *וְלֶחֶם לֶבֶב אָנוּשׁ יִסְעֵד*,<sup>1</sup> Chazal elevated its *b'racha* and formulated the *b'racha* - *hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz*.

### Is there a minimum one must eat to recite hamotzi?

There is no minimum and one recites *hamotzi* even on a bread crumb.

### Is there a minimum for netilas yadayim?

It is crucial to know that although one should wash *Netilas Yadayim* for a crumb of bread,<sup>2</sup> the *b'racha* "*al netilas yadayim*" is not

<sup>1</sup> *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 167:1.

<sup>2</sup> Although major *poskim* rule that for less than a *k'zayis* one need not wash – *Oruch HaShulchan* 158:3 and *Chasam Sofer* 127, the *M"b* 158:10 rules that *l'chatchila* one should be stringent and wash. The *Birkei Yosef* 158:4 and the *Beis Me'ir* say that one need not wash for less than a *k'zayis* but the *Kaf HaChaim* 158: 10 says that since the *Elya Rabah*, *Ma'amar Mordechai*, *N'har Shalom* and *Derech HaChaim* say to wash without a *b'racha*, one should avoid *machlokes* and wash even for the less than a *k'zayis* but without a *b'racha*.

recited when eating less than a *k'zayis* of bread. When eating a *k'zayis* of bread, the *Vilna Ga'on* and Rav Moshe Feinstein rule that one recites a *b'racha* while the *Mishna Berura*<sup>3</sup> rules that one should refrain from reciting a *b'racha* unless one eats a *k'beitza*. The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*<sup>4</sup> also rules that one washes for any amount but only recites a *b'racha* "*al netilas yadayim*" when eating a *k'beitza*.

### Which breads require hamotzi?

One only recites *hamotzi* on bread containing one of the five grains, but rice or corn bread is not *hamotzi*. One does not wash for rice or corn bread.

The *b'racha* for rice bread is *mezonos*, and even if one eats a large amount it remains *mezonos*. The *b'racha* for corn bread is *shehakol*, regardless of the amount eaten.

### May I talk between washing hands and "al netilas yadayim"?

One must not talk between washing and the *b'racha*, because the *b'racha* pertains to the mitzvah of washing and talking constitutes an interruption – a *hefsek*.

The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* writes<sup>5</sup> that many people refrain from talking after washing before the *hamotzi* but talk between washing and *birkas* "*al netilas yadayim*", and they are

<sup>3</sup> *Siman* 158:9.

<sup>4</sup> *Siman* 158:2.

<sup>5</sup> *Siman* 165:1.

mistaken. We see that one may not talk between washing and "*al netilas yadayim*".

### *What about talking after washing one hand?*

One should *l'chatchila* not speak after washing one hand because it is a mitzvah to wash both hands and the *b'racha* recited after washing pertains to each hand. Talking constitutes a *hefsek* between the mitzvah and the *b'racha*.<sup>6</sup>

### *If I spoke after al netilas yadayim and drying before hamotzi, do I need to wash again?*

The *gemora* says – תיכף לנטילה ברכה, which means that as soon as one has washed one must recite the *b'racha*. Some *Rishonim* learn that the *gemora* is referring to מים אחרונים and one must *bentch* right after מים אחרונים, while other *Rishonim* learn that it refers to *hamotzi* after washing, i.e. there must be no interruption after washing for bread.

What constitutes a *hefsek*:-

~ waiting the time it takes to walk 22 *amos*.<sup>7</sup> Even sitting in one's place doing nothing is incorrect when able to recite the *hamotzi* and for no apparent reason one stalls. Waiting for household members and guests to be seated does not constitute a *hefsek* because it is necessary for the meal.

~ talking, even *divrei Torah*. The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* says that saying two, three words is not a *hefsek* and one may reply yes or no to a question. One may definitely not engage in any talking.

~ doing something, engaging in activity.

Nevertheless, even if one caused an interruption, as long as one knew that one is about to make *hamotzi* and eat, one need not wash again. It is commonly believed that if one spoke even a single word one must wash again and this, as explained, is wrong.

### *May I ask to bring the salt or the knife?*

Anything spoken for sake of the bread is not a *hefsek* and one *l'chatchila* may say what is necessary. Consequently, one may say please bring the salt or knife; please feed the animals, because halachically one is obligated to feed one's animals before oneself. It is totally unnecessary to use sign language or hints and grunts as one may speak directly that which is necessary for *hamotzi*.

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## Vort on the Z'man

A mikveh cannot purify someone with a *chatzitzta* – it prevents the water from reaching the entire body. If you want *tabara*, you must remove *chatzitzta*. So too, if you want *Hashem* to *metaber*, you must remove the *chatzitzta*, which are bad *middos*, especially *ga'avah*. *Ga'avah* prevents *Hashem* from getting close. *Nesivos Shalom*.

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<sup>6</sup> *Ohr Le'tzion* vol. II 11:3, *T'shuvos V'hanhagos* vol. II 115.

<sup>7</sup> Learned from walking in the *Beis Hamikdash*. The *poskim* explain that they would walk toe to heel and that is how this time span is calculated.

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