

HALOCHOSCOPE

This week's question:

Assuming that at *seudas Purim* bread is a requirement, does this apply to any meal eaten during the day? Is there a requirement to eat meat at the *seuda*?

The issues:

A) *Seudas Purim*

B) *The requirement to eat bread at the seuda*

C) *The requirement to eat meat, or other special foods, on Purim*

A) *Seudas Purim*

The *Megillah* lists the *mitzvos* undertaken to commemorate Purim, including: '*yemei mishteh vesimcha*', days of feasting and joy. On *Shabbos* eating is usually included under the term *oneg*, based on a verse in *Yeshaya*. In addition, when Moshe told the people about eating the extra *mohn* on *Shabbos*, he used the word 'today' three times. This indicates that to properly fulfill the *mitzvah* of *oneg*, one must eat three meals. One Talmudic opinion requires three meals during the daytime, but we follow the view that one is eaten at night. Some try to satisfy the other view with a smaller snack-type 'meal'. The *Shabbos* meals are based on bread; the *mohn* on which they are modeled is called bread.

On *Yomtov*, the Torah requires *simcha*, to enjoy meat of offerings, as well as wine, based on other Scriptural references to joy. For *Yomtov*, too, extra *mohn* was provided. Some say that one should eat an extra meal on *Yomtov*, similar to the third meal on *Shabbos*. Most people eat the two meals, one by night and one by day. On *Pesach* night there is a *mitzvah* to eat *matzah*. *Sukos* is juxtaposed to *Pesach*, and there is a Scriptural obligation to eat a bread meal in the *Sukah* on the first night. The *mitzvah* is to dwell in the *sukah*. Normative dwelling, or living, includes eating two meals daily. One should, ideally eat fourteen meals over the course of *Sukos*. One Talmudic view requires this. Based on the *mohn*, at each meal eaten on *Shabbos* or on *Yomtov*, two loaves are used.

Purim is all about eating and drinking, but the actual timing and foods are more nebulous, as we shall see. Originally, there was an attempt to institute Purim as a Rabbinical *Yomtov*, much like the second day of *Yomtov* in the Diaspora. However, this proposal was not adopted, and a reduced form of holiday was instituted, as *yemei mishteh vesimcha*, days of feasting. The terminology used by the poskim is that there is a *mitzvah* '*leharbos biseuda*', that can be translated as to increase *seuda*.

The Talmud assumes that only one meal is necessary to fulfill the obligation. There is a suggestion that this could take place by night. This would allow the regular study session to take place. The Talmud, however rejects this view, based on the term *yemei*, days, of feasting. We follow the view that it must be eaten during the daytime, but there

is no clear indication as to when this should take place. Furthermore, the poskim suggest that one should eat at night as well, but that this does not fulfill one's full obligation. One usually fasts on the day before *Purim*, and is hungry for a meal at night. When *Purim* falls on Sunday, people are often full at night, from the third *Shabbos* meal. Nonetheless, it is a praiseworthy practice to eat a meal.

The timing of the daytime meal is subject to much debate. Some suggest that since one does not delay a *mitzvah*, it should be eaten at the earliest opportunity. In addition, the requirement to eat also dictates that one may not fast. Refraining from eating past midday is considered a violation of this restriction on fasting. Those who delay the *seuda* due to the other activities of the day, often find themselves rushing to eat it at the end of the day. This is condemned, as it hardly shows proper respect for the *mitzvah* of the day.

Others, however, suggest reasons to delay the *seuda*. Some maintain that the *mitzvah* of *mishloach manos*, giving food gifts to others, takes precedence. It is also a *mitzvah* of the day, and one should not eat before performing a *mitzvah* that already is incumbent on him. A response to this is that eating the *seuda* is also a *mitzvah*. Some poskim point out that giving gifts to the poor, another *mitzvah*, is required right after *davening* anyhow, before anything else. This can be explained as satisfying a more urgent need. In addition, it is considered the highest form of service on this day, since it causes abundant joy by contrast to the other *mitzvos*. There is also an indication, both in the Talmud and in other *halachos* mentioned by the poskim, that *mishloach manos* is actually connected to the *seuda*. One would prepare his *seuda*, and then take a portion to send to his fellow, either before or after he begins eating himself. Some add, the order of the *mitzvos* as listed in the *Megillah* is: *mishteh vesimcha (seuda)*, *mishloach manos* and *matanos la'evyonim*. Furthermore, the *seuda* commemorates the feast of Esther. This was in the morning, for we learn that Haman was hung during the morning hours, in the middle of the feast.

Others say, since the term used is *yemei mishteh vesimcha*, days of feasting, in the plural, one must really fulfill *seuda* in some way on the second day as well. Those who live in unwalled towns do not eat a *seuda* on the following day. Therefore, to fulfill this obligation, they should eat their *seuda* at a time when they can allow it to encroach into the evening of the Fifteenth. Some even justify a practice of beginning the *seuda* so late that the bulk of it is at night following the day of *Purim*. The common practice is to *daven mincha* first, because one should not begin a banquet once the time has come for *mincha*, before *davening*. Some even say that this is the reason to delay the start of the *seuda*. If one were to start before midday, he might get caught up in the festivities and miss *mincha*. This is not such a concern on a regular *Shabbos* or *Yomtov*, because people do not eat or drink quite as much then. [Unfortunately people often miss *mincha* on *Shabbos* or *Yomtov*, having overeaten, overdrunk and overslept.] As for the requirement to avoid fasting, and the requirement to eat as soon as possible, snacking all day satisfies this.

Nonetheless, many poskim insist that it is more praiseworthy to eat during the morning hours. When *Purim* is on *Erev Shabbos*, many more subscribe to this view. Some people have the practice to eat a meal in the morning and one in the afternoon. In explanation, some say that while it is not a true *Yomtov*, one must still eat the two meals of a

Yomtov. Since one does not fulfill this obligation by night, he should do so by day. Some say that the morning meal satisfies the requirement to eat the *seuda* as soon as possible. The evening meal is when one 'increases his *seuda*' by eating a lot more. Some say that the idea of increasing *seuda* does not necessarily mean to eat more at one *seuda*. Rather, it means having more of *seuda*, including more than one meal a day.

In practice, the poskim say that one must have at least one *seuda* on Purim by day. One should also eat more than his usual at night. Some have the practice to make fresh bread to be eaten at night. Some are particular not to eat meat at night, to remind themselves that one does not fulfill his obligation with this *seuda*. One should also increase his eating and drinking on the Fifteenth, both by night (usually by extending his *seuda*) and the next day. [See Megillah 7b, Poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 695:1 2 4, commentaries. Moadim Uzemanim II:186 (& VII:186), Mishneh Halachos VI:126 VII:92.]

B) Eating bread at the seuda

As mentioned, on *Shabbos* and *Yomtov* there is a requirement to eat bread. On *Purim* it is unclear whether there is a requirement. In theory, a *seuda*, and especially a *seudas mitzvah*, automatically means a bread meal. In a Scriptural reference bread is *so'aid*. In practice one often has a *seuda* without bread. An example of the way this affects *halacha* is whether a mourner may participate in a *Shabbos kiddush*. Some permit it because there is usually no bread served. Others maintain that *seuda* does not require bread. On *Purim*, there is no direct indication of any requirement to eat bread.

The poskim debate whether one must repeat *bircas hamazon* if he omitted *al hanisim*. On *Rosh Chodesh* (by day) omission of *yaaleh veyavo* during *shemone esrai* requires a repetition. Omission during *bircas hamazon* does not require repetition. Unlike *Shabbos* and *Yomtov*, there is no requirement to eat bread. On *Purim*, omission of *al hanisim* during *shemone esrai* does not obligate repetition. However, since the *seuda* is so integral to *Purim*, the poskim suggest that omission of *al hanisim* in *bircas hamazon* obligates repetition. On *Shabbos*, one must repeat *bircas hamazon* if he omitted *retzei*. However, in the third meal, he should not repeat. Some say that this is because he could fulfill the third meal without bread. Similarly, on *Purim* one is required to eat only one meal. Therefore, if he omitted *al hanisim* after that meal, one would think that he must repeat *bircas hamazon*. If he omitted it after a subsequent meal, the poskim debate whether he must repeat. Some say that any meal on *Purim* is a *mitzvah* of the day. One should, therefore eat bread in it, making *bircas hamazon* with *al hanisim* a requirement. Others maintain that one meal is sufficient, and that omission after any subsequent meal does not obligate repetition. In fact, they maintain, one should not really be obliged to repeat even after the first meal, since there is no requirement to eat bread. In practice, one does not repeat, due to the doubt. This indicates that there is no consensus on the requirement to eat bread at any *seuda* on Purim. However, the common practice is to eat at least one *seuda* with bread. Those who eat more than one *seuda* also eat them with bread. [See e.g., Sh Ar OC 593:2 595:3, commentaries.]

C) Special foods on Purim

There are various foods that one eats especially on Purim. Wine is the preferred

strong beverage. The Hamantash is really a pastry with something hidden inside. This is meant to remind us of the hidden miracle, and the nature of *Purim* as a hidden *Yomtov*. In the royal palace Esther found a way to keep kosher by eating beans and seed foods. Therefore there is a *minhag* to eat these. Some say this should be eaten by night. Some have a *minhag* to eat milk products for the morning *seuda*. This is based on the *minhag* to eat dairy on *Shavuos*, due to the comparison of the Torah to milk and honey. The Talmud says that the people reaffirmed their acceptance of the Torah on *Purim*.

The question is whether there is a requirement to eat meat at a *seuda* on *Purim*. On *Yomtov* in temple times there was a requirement to eat meat of an animal offering (as opposed to a bird or meal offering). This was the only way to properly fulfill the Scriptural *mitzvah* of *simcha*, rejoicing. Since the same term is used for *Purim*, some suggest that one can only fulfill the *mitzvah* on *Purim* with meat. Others point out that many Poskim maintain that even on *Yomtov*, nowadays, one cannot be obliged to eat meat. The absence of offerings means that only wine brings true 'Scriptural' joy. Furthermore, even on *Shabbos*, if one does not enjoy meat, he cannot be obliged to eat it. Rather he should eat whatever makes him happy. In temple times, there were other parts to *simcha*, such as giving children walnuts and toasted barley. Rather, they suggest, eating meat is a way to add to the basic *seuda*. Thus it fulfills the '*leharbos biseuda*' ideal. Those who mention it mean it as a standard example, but not an obligation. This can have *halachic* consequences. A freshly bereaved person may not eat meat. On *Shabbos* and *Yomtov* this is suspended, for various reasons. Should it be suspended on *Purim*? A person planning to immerse in a *mikvah* avoids eating meat. It can get caught in one's teeth, a *chatzitza*, adhesion that could invalidate the *tevilah*. What about eating it on *Purim*? The poskim discuss these issues, with varying views.

In practice, if one can, he should eat some meat, unless he does not enjoy it. There is certainly no requirement to eat it at more than one *seuda*. [See Rambam, Megillah 2:15. Tur Sh Ar OC 242 250:2 529:1-2 695:1 (Ar Hash 7 Orchos Chaim 4) 696:7, commentaries. Moadim Uzemanim II:190. Mishneh Halachos VI:126 VII:93 96 VIII:234.]

In conclusion, there is a consensus that one should eat a bread *seuda*, but no consensus that one does not fulfill his obligation without it. One need not eat bread at more than one *seuda*. Eating meat at the main *seuda* is ideal, for those who enjoy it.

On the Parsha ... *And they brought even more donations, in the morning, in the morning ... the people are 'marbim' bringing very much, too much for all the work .. [36:3 5]* Why does the Torah say that they brought it in the morning? Why repeat it? Why would the workers complain about the 'people' bringing much, when they could just say that the donations were too much? The Torah is teaching us that it was due to the eagerness of the people bringing, which was actually in their praise. They brought it very early each morning, before doing anything else. This might have been in addition to donations later in the day. This is how one fulfills '*marbim*'.

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