

HALOCHOSCOPE

This week's question:

On *Chanukah*, it is customary to eat dairy or cheese dishes. Someone enjoys cheese blintzes more than meat or poultry dishes. May he eat cheese blintzes for his Friday night *seuda* on *Shabbos Chanukah*?

The issues:

- A) Eating cheese on *Chanukah*
- B) *Oneg Shabbos*
- C) Eating meat for the *Shabbos seudos*

A) *Cheese on Chanukah*

Chanukah and *Purim* are both Rabbinically instituted holidays, to commemorate the defeat of an enemy and relief from the persecutions. The main difference between the institutions is that on *Purim* the threat was physical annihilation. On *Chanukah* it was spiritual suppression. Therefore, on *Purim* we celebrate with physical activities, such as eating and drinking. There is a *mitzvah* to eat a *seuda*, and to fulfill *simcha*, which is fulfilled by eating meat and drinking wine. On *Chanukah* the main institution is spiritual. We recite *hallel* and add parts to the thanksgiving section of *davening*, to sing praises to Hashem. There is no *mitzvah* to celebrate *Chanukah* with a *seuda*, or even *simcha*.

However, it is common to sing praises to Hashem with the help of a *seuda* that includes *simcha*. Therefore, if one eats a *seuda* and uses the opportunity to sing praises, he fulfills the theme of thanksgiving as well. In addition, another side to the holiday is a commemoration of the *chanukas hamizbaiach*, the reconsecration of the altar in the *Bais Hamikdash*. The Greeks had defiled the altar and it needed to be demolished and rebuilt. Dedicating the altar is indeed cause for celebrating with a *seuda*, as we learn from Shlomo Hamelech, whose *chanukas hamizbaiach* lasted through *Yom Kippur*. That year, they did not fast on *Yom Kippur*. It is forbidden to fast on *Chanukah*. The name given to the holiday also represents the *chanukas hamizbaiach*, and the Torah readings come from the passage in The Torah relating to the offerings made on the twelve days of the original *chanukas hamizbaiach* in the wilderness, when they dedicated the *Mishkan*.

Accordingly, there is a widespread custom to feast throughout *Chanukah* with *seudos* that include singing praises and Torah discourses. These can then be considered *seudos mitzvah*. There is an opinion that these *seudos* must include some meat and wine. This is based on an opinion that the initial institution was made to celebrate days of *simcha vehallel*, joy and thanksgiving. The poskim question this reference, but some say that the Talmud uses the terminology *Yomtov*, which implies *simcha*. There is also a minority opinion that if one omitted *al hanisim* in *bircas hamazon* on *Chanukah* he must repeat it with *al hanisim*. This would mean that eating a bread based *seuda* is essential enough to

warrant this, just like *Shabbos* and *Yomtov*. We do not follow this view as obligatory, but many try to satisfy the view that a *seuda* including bread, meat and wine should be eaten on *Chanukah*. In any event, the custom to have many *seudos* replete with songs of praise is indeed widespread.

The custom to eat dairy is much more well founded. The background is the Talmudic dictum giving the reason that women are obligated in *ner Chanukah*, despite its being time-bound (albeit Rabbinical in origin which means that they could obligate women). The Talmud says that the women were also included in the miracle. On the simple level, this refers to the spiritual existential threat that faced both men and women equally.

However, most commentaries explain it differently. There are three or four versions of the events. In one version, the Greeks had instituted a rule that any bride would have to be defiled by an officer on the day of her wedding. Yehudis, the beautiful daughter of Yochanan Kohen Gadol, decided to revolt against this. It was due to her organizing the women to revolt, and her complaining to her father and the other Chashmonaim, that the entire revolution began. The second version is that when her turn came, she enticed the Greek general Holifernas to entertain her in his quarters. She plied him with cheese and wine so that he became drowsy, and she killed him. According to one version, she then left and returned to the Jewish camp, who attacked. When the Greek army ran to tell their general, they found him dead and fled. According to another version, Yehudis brought his decapitated head to Yerushalayim and displayed it to the Greek army, who took flight at the sight. This allowed the Chashmonaim to re-enter Yerushalayim and retake the Bais Hamikdash. A third version is that Yehudis did this of her own initiative, rather than when her wedding day came. A fourth version is that the incident actually took place at another point in the wars against the Greeks. According to that version, she gave him a lot of milk to drink. However, since it was considered a miraculous event within the saga, we commemorate the miracle. This leads to two special customs. We eat cheese or dairy foods on *Chanukah*, and the womenfolk refrain from labor after the candles are lit.

Thus, it is a long-established custom to eat cheese dishes on *Chanukah*. This is considered part of the *pirsumei nisa*, publicizing the miracle. Some point out that the custom is specifically to eat special cheese dish, rather than drinking milk, which is done every day. A common variety of this *minhag* is to eat cheese blintzes, which are also somewhat fried. Thus another custom is fulfilled at the same time. Many people eat dough deep-fried in oil, to commemorate the miracle of the oil. [See *Shabbos* 23a *Kesubos* 3b, *Poskim*. *Midrash Maaseh Yehudis*. *Tur Sh Ar OC* 670:3 675, commentaries. *Nitei Gavriel Chanukah* 51:9-13, notes. *Halochoscope* XIV:19.]

B) Oneg Shabbos

There are actually two separate obligations in honor of *Shabbos*, *kavod*, honor, and *oneg*, delight. *Kavod* is the attention given to making *Shabbos* or *Yomtov* special. This includes wearing special clothing, cleaning the house, setting the table in a special way and preparing special foods. Some say that anything done in advance of *Shabbos* qualifies as *kavod*. *Ner Shabbos*, the candles, are considered *kavod Shabbos*, as well as serving other purposes. *Oneg* is defined as the enjoyment one experiences on *Shabbos*. This comes from eating the special foods as the individual sees fit and by relaxing and enjoying the

spirit of *Shabbos*. Enjoying the *nairos* is included in *oneg Shabbos*. On *Yomtov* there is an additional obligation of *simcha*, rejoicing. This includes special gifts and treats and eating meat and wine, as mentioned.

On *Shabbos* one is obliged to eat three bread based meals to commemorate the extra *mohn* that was granted for *Shabbos*. Some say the Scriptural term '*ichluhu hayom*', eat it today implies a specific *mitzvah*. Most consider it part of *oneg Shabbos*, a Prophetic *mitzvah* to enjoy *Shabbos*. In one view, there is a Scriptural obligation to eat, at least, a *kezayis*, olive-sized piece, of bread. One must also use *lechem mishneh*, two loaves for the *brocha* to commemorate the double share of *mohn*. The daytime meal should include hot food. A deviant sect of Jews would not keep a fire burning in their homes on *Shabbos*. In defiance of the Sages, they followed a literal interpretation of the *passuk*. To show that one does not subscribe to this view, one keeps a fire to keep his food hot, in a permissible manner. The poskim say this is also due to *oneg Shabbos*. The obligation of *oneg* in the *seudos* includes eating at least two cooked foods. Some say that this refers to one cooked food for each of the two main *seudos*, the evening and the daytime meals. There is also an indication that one should make the daytime *seuda* better than the evening *seuda*, because the honor due to the day is more important. [See Beshalach 16:25 Brochos 44a 49a-b Shabbos Prk 2. 37a-b, Maor, 117b-119a Bechoros 2b, Poskim. Teshuvos Rashba 614. Tur Sh Ar OC 242 243 263: 2273:7 288:2 289-291, commentaries.]

C) Meat for *oneg Shabbos*

The Talmud says that the standard fulfillment of *oneg Shabbos* includes large fish, garlic heads and beets. The minimum fulfillment of *oneg Shabbos* includes a type of fried fish. Therefore, when the trustees of *tzedakah* distribute it to the poor, they must account for the recipient being able to purchase this for his *Shabbos seuda*. Based on this, the *minhag* arose to eat fish at *seudos Shabbos*. [Perhaps the widespread custom of horseradish and beets is also based on the Talmudic reference to beets.] Some say that the fish mentioned has some batter, and can count as two cooked foods. Some point out that fish may not be eaten together with meat. By having fish, one is compelled to eat two separate cooked dishes. This implies that meat is also required. In fact, the poskim mention meat as a requirement. However, the poskim explain that the Talmud's use of fried fish as an example is due to what was considered a special food in those times. Accordingly, when the poskim mention meat and wine, this is due to the popularity of these as special foods. This is because in former times, these were not usually eaten during the week. Since they were only eaten on *Shabbos*, it makes it special. Most people enjoy these types of foods. Therefore, it is assumed that this leads to *oneg Shabbos*.

This leads to discussion on whether to eat dairy foods at the main *Shabbos seudos*. The Talmud forbids eating meat and drinking wine at the *seuda mafsekess*, the final meal before Tisha b"Av. [The *minhag* to refrain from *Rosh Chodesh* was added later.] This is to demonstrate *availus*, mourning, which is advanced to *Erev Tisha b"Av*. There are references in *Tanach* and the Talmud to refraining from meat and wine when in mourning. An *onen*, bereaved person is actually forbidden to eat meat and to drink wine. This also indicates that the opposite of *availus*, which would be *simcha* and *oneg*, requires eating meat and drinking wine. [Incidentally, this also indicates the requirement of two cooked

dishes for *seudas Shabbos*.]

However, if *Tisha b'Av* falls on *Motzai Shabbos*, the *seuda mafsekess* falls on *Shabbos*. One may not show open manifestations of mourning on *Shabbos*. This is mainly due to *oneg Shabbos*. Therefore, the Talmud permits eating meat and drinking wine, because it is *Shabbos*. The poskim use terminology that is more emphatic, forbidding one from refraining from it. This implies that there is indeed an obligation to eat meat. However, the poskim explain that there really is no obligation to eat meat. Thus, one could choose to eat whatever he wishes. Nonetheless, one who refrains from eating the meat at this meal for the specific reason that it is *seuda mafsekess* is violating *oneg Shabbos* by practicing *avails*.

Accordingly, if one enjoys other foods more than those mentioned by the Talmud and poskim, he should rather eat those. In fact, if the person does not care for fish, he should not eat it. He will not get his *oneg* from it, but will actually suffer. In the same way, one who does not care for meat, or who has a health issue requiring him to reduce or eliminate it from his diet, should certainly not eat it on *Shabbos*. In our case, the person actually prefers blintzes. Theoretically, he could eat them every *Shabbos*. However, he also enjoys meat and poultry, though not as much. Furthermore, he usually eats with company. Meat is a common denominator between most people as an enjoyable food. Therefore, he usually eats meat. This *Shabbos*, since it is anyhow *Shabbos Chanukah*, he would like to eat his favorite blintzes. In light of our discussion, he would fulfill his obligation of *oneg Shabbos* and the *minhag* of eating cheese delicacies and oil fried foods and even *seudas Chanukah* according to most poskim this way. He should be careful not to eat them together with others eating meat. [See Refs to earlier sections. Taanis 29b-30a, poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 242 250:2 552:9, commentaries.]

In conclusion, he may eat cheese blintzes for his main *Shabbos* meals.

On the parsha slaughter a slaughtered animal and prepare it, for the men will eat with me at noon-time ... [43:16] ... for it was an abomination for Egyptians to eat with Hebrews ... because the Hebrews ate meat of animals that were worshiped by Egypt ... [43:32 Targum] Yosef prepared for two meals. There are varying interpretations, including the preparation of meat for a *Shabbos seuda*, as Yosef did every Friday [see *Beraishis Raba* 91:4, *Eitz Yosef*]. Apparently, even in that time, it was considered special to prepare meat for *Shabbos*. Furthermore, despite the fact that locally it was considered abominable, since Yosef and his brothers prized it, it qualified as special *Shabbos* food for them. Whatever the individual considers special should be prepared for his *Shabbos seuda*.

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Chanukah. Mazal tov.  

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