The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן קס"ז סעיף ה'

Overview

Siman 168 Seif 5:

If one has bread of fine flour baked by a gentile and bread of coarse flour baked by a Jew, if he is not careful with regards to pas akum he may recite the beracha on either bread. If he is careful with regards to pas akum he should remove the bread of fine flour baked by the gentile from the table until after he recites hamotzi. If the ba'al habayis is not careful regarding pas akum and he only plans on eating the pas akum since it is "cleaner" but the members of his household will eat the "non-clean" bread baked by a Jew and both loaves are on the table he should break the "clean" bread baked by the gentile since he is the one breaking the bread and he intends to eat from that loaf. If the ba'al habayis is careful regarding pas akum and a Jew who is not careful regarding pas akum is reclining with him at his table, since the mitzvah is upon the ba'al habayis he should break the "clean" bread baked by the gentile and once he is permitted to break that bread he may eat it for the remainder of the meal. This applies only when he likes that bread but if he does not like that bread regardless of the fact that it was baked by a gentile he is not required to give precedence to that loaf.

- If all matters are equal, preference should be given to the bread baked by the Jew. (M.B. 17)
- Many authorities disagree with Shulchan Aruch, being that he is careful with regards to pas akum what difference does it make that he prefers that bread. Nevertheless, one should be mindful of this ruling and remove the pas akum. (M.B. 19)
- Even though he is reciting the beracha on behalf of the members of his household who will eat the other bread, nevertheless, since he will not eat that bread and he is the ba'al habayis he recites the beracha on the bread that he will eat. (M.B. 20)
- Since the guest will eat the pas akum the host is permitted to eat it as well to honor his guest but if there was no guest he would not be permitted to recite the beracha on pas akum and would be required to remove it from the table. Nowadays that every person recites the beracha for himself this halacha does not apply and each person recites the beracha on the bread of their choice. (M.B. 21)
- Rema means that the person really enjoys that bread and he refrains only because it is pas akum, therefore, they permitted him to eat it to honor his guest. In the event that he does not like the bread and does not want to eat it he should recite the beracha on the bread that is kosher. (M.B. 22)

Stories to Share

Room for Leniency?

ש"ע, ס' קס"ח, ה': "פת עבודת כוכבים..."

Today's amud discusses the halachos of breaking bread on pas akum.

A certain Americal rav who was closely involved with kashrus organizations visited Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l, during the gadol's final months. This rav came to inquire regarding certain halachos of bishul akum. He explained many different cases and asked if he was required to follow the stringent opinions despite certain difficulties in doing so. After all, the Talmudic rule of safek d'rabanan l'hakel presumably applies no less to these halachos.

Rav Shlomo Zalman replied in an emotional voice. "I will tell you my opinion regarding bishul akum in our times. In our generation, we have seen very much intermarriage, especially in America, heaven help us. Perhaps this problem is the worst it has ever has been throughout our long galus. Obviously it is incumbent upon us to search for the spiritual source of this tragedy and correct it.

"But our sages taught that the root of this problem is eating non-Jewish bread and wine, and the Tur and Shulchan Aruch in Yoreh Deya 112 bring this gemara. Yet instead of being exceedingly careful of all the decrees of Chazal in these matters, people in our generation search for all sorts of leniencies which are certainly against the spirit of Chazal even in cases that are a real stretch of the halachah. Although many respectable people with yiras shamayim all over the world have made various attempts to stem the tide of intermarriage, we have not yet been saved from this calamity. The reason these efforts have so far been unsuccessful is because we still rely on such leniencies."

Rav Auerbach continued, "Our only recourse is to go to the opposite extreme and start being very careful in all the areas we were once lenient. Fortunate are you if you succeed to erect fences in these areas, acting the way the sages wanted. In this manner, Jewish children who are distant from their heritage will not marry non-Jews, G-d forbid, and you will be grated a great heavenly reward."

הליכות שלמה ח"ב, ע' מי"ב

Halacha Highlihgt

Choosing a loaf upon which to recite hamotzi

Shulchan Aruch Siman 168 Seif 5

פת עובד כוכבים נקיה וכו'

Pas akum made from sifted flour etc.

Shulchan Aruch discusses the issue of determining which loaf to use when one has different types of loaves to choose from. Some of the factors that are involved are whether the bread was baked by a Jew or a gentile and whether the bread was made with sifted flour or coarse flour. Another one of the issues that has to be considered is what happens when different people at the table will be eating from different loaves. For example, if the ba'al habayis is not concerned about the restriction of pas akum and there is pas akum made from sifted flour that he intends to eat. The members of his household, however, will be eating pas yisroel made from coarse flour. The halacha is that the ba'al habayis should recite the beracha on the pas akum, since he is the one who is reciting the beracha and his intention is to eat from that loaf. Although the other members of his household will not be eating from the pas akum loaf, nevertheless, since he will eat the pas akum and he is the ba'al habayis he is considered primary and decides which loaf to use for hamotzi (מ"ב סק"כ).

Shulchan Aruch then discusses a case in which the ba'al habayis avoids pas akum and the guest eats pas akum. In this case the halacha is that the ba'al habayis should recite the beracha on the pas akum loaf. Bais Yosef explains that pas akum is not inherently prohibited and people avoid eating it as a chumra. As such, when there are grounds to be lenient with regards to that chumra one may exercise that leniency. Moreover, once the ba'al habayis is permitted to recite hamotzi on the pas akum, he may eat it for the remainder of the meal. Kaf HaChaim (אות ט"ל) notes that Arizal maintained a very stringent position with regards to pas akum; therefore, it is preferable to have the guest recite hamotzi for himself from the pas akum and the ba'al habayis will recite hamotzi on the pas yisroel.