

## **EATING IN THE SUCCAH ON THE FIRST NIGHT OF SUCCOS**

*Every adult male is Biblically obligated to eat a k'zayis of bread in a succah on the first night of Succos. The Talmud derives this obligation from the similar obligation of eating a k'zayis of matzah on the first night of Pesach. Since these two obligations are closely related, their halachos are similar in many respects. Like all mitzvos, this mitzvah, too, can only be properly fulfilled if there is prior planning and clear knowledge of all the requirements. Let us review the pertinent halachos:*

### **WHEN IS IT EATEN?**

1. In the late afternoon of erev Succos, one should not eat so much food or wine that he will be unable to eat the k'zayis of bread with a good appetite.
2. One cannot eat the k'zayis of bread [nor make the Kiddush that precedes it until it is definitely night, preferably no earlier than 50 minutes after sundown. If one ate before that time, he must eat another k'zayis of bread in order to fulfill the mitzvah.
3. The k'zayis of bread may not be eaten after midnight. B'dieved, though, one who did not eat before midnight should do so after midnight and recite the proper blessing.
4. Preferably, one should sit down to eat the k'zayis of bread immediately after coming home from Ma'ariv. Unnecessary delays should be avoided.

### **IN FACT, HOW MUCH MUST BE EATEN?**

1. There are various views among the poskim about the exact measurement of a k'zayis. Since this is a Biblical obligation, it is proper to be stringent and eat at least 1.75 fl. oz. of bread, although one who eats 1 oz. of bread fulfills his obligation.
2. There is a view among the Rishonim that holds that the minimum amount of bread one is obligated to eat in the succah on the first night is slightly more than a k'beitzah, not merely a k'zayis. Although the basic halachah does not require the larger amount, still it is proper to satisfy that view as well. The amount to be eaten [to satisfy all views], therefore, is 3.5 oz. of bread.
3. The bread which is eaten [whether it is a k'zayis or slightly more than a k'beitzah must be eaten within a time-span of 3-4 minutes. One may not talk until he has chewed and swallowed the full amount. L'chatchilah, it is proper to chew and then swallow a k'zayis of bread in its entirety.

### **THE BASIC PROCEDURE**

1. One is obligated to eat the minimum amount of bread even if he does not enjoy it and even if it causes him distress. Even a person who is classified as a choleh sh'ein bo sakanah is obligated to eat a k'zayis of bread.
2. Before eating the bread, one must have in mind that he is about to fulfill the Biblical mitzvah of eating bread on the first night of Succos. If one fails to have this intent and eats the piece of bread as he normally does every Shabbos or Yom Tov, it is questionable if he has fulfilled the mitzvah. In any case, he should eat another portion of bread with the proper intent.
3. One does not fulfill his obligation by eating cake, etc. Only bread made out of one of the five species of grain is valid.
4. Women are exempt from this mitzvah, but if they do eat the required amount of bread in the succah, it is considered a mitzvah and they may recite the blessing over the succah.
5. There are some who maintain that the bread should be eaten without being dipped in honey, etc. (as is the custom between Rosh Hashanah and Shemini Atzeres). Most poskim are not particular about this stringency.

### **ARE WE REQUIRED TO FULFILL THIS MITZVAH WHEN IT IS RAINING?**

There are many discussions among the poskim concerning the obligation to eat in the succah on the first night of Succos if it is raining. The following points are raised:

If rain is falling, is one obligated to eat in the succah or not? If it is raining, is one obligated to wait and see if the rain will stop so that he can eat in a rain-free succah? If one does eat in the succah while it is raining, can a blessing be recited? If a person ate in the succah while it was raining and then the rain stopped, is he required to eat in the succah again? If a person ate in the succah while it was raining and then went to sleep, is he obligated to get out of bed to eat again once the rain has stopped? Since there are different rulings on all of these issues, the following is a summary of the majority opinion:

1. If it is raining steadily and there is a reliable weather forecast for rain all night, one should make Kiddush [with shehecheyanu] and eat a k'zayis [or slightly more than a k'beitzah in the succah. No blessing over the succah is recited. The rest of the meal is eaten in the house.
2. If there is no reliable weather forecast and there is a possibility that the rain will stop [e.g., it is drizzling or it is raining off and on], it is proper to wait an hour or two for the rain to subside. The poskim agree, however, that if the delay will disturb the dignity and pleasure of the Yom Tov, or if the family is hungry and/or tired, there is no obligation to wait.
3. If the rain stops while the meal is being eaten in the house or even after the meal is finished, one is obligated to go to the succah, recite leishev ba-succah, and eat at least slightly more than a beitzah of bread. Even if the rain stops after midnight, that amount of bread must be eaten in the succah. If one has already gone to bed and then the rain stops, there is no obligation to get out of bed in order to eat in the succah. *(Rabbi Daniel Neustadt, torah.org) For final rulings, consult your Rav.*