



# Gluten-Free Diet and Shabbat Considerations

לעילוי נשמת  
יואל אפרים בן אברהם עוזיאל זלצמן ז"ל

**Question:** Some family members (including me) are gluten-intolerant, so we have two types of *challot* and cakes, with and without grain flour. Is the gluten-free type valid for: 1. Completing the *Kiddush* process; 2. *Lechem mishneh*; 3. Continuing *seuda shlishit* that began before sunset?

**Answer:**

1. **Kiddush** - The *gemara* (Pesachim 101a) teaches that we must make *Kiddush* in a place where a “meal” will follow. That discussion also refers to “tasting” after *Kiddush*, which implies less than a classic meal. Although some authorities require the tasting to include bread, the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 273:5) rules that wine satisfies this requirement. The Magen Avraham (273:11) reasons that if wine qualifies, then foods made from one of the “five grains,” which are more meal-like, certainly suffice (OC 273:11). The Pri Megadim (ad loc.) extends this to dates, but most *poskim* disagree (see Yabia Omer VII, OC 35).

Based on the above, one who cannot eat from the “five grains” (many gluten-sensitive people can eat specially cultivated oats) should drink a *revi'it* of wine or grape juice (Mishna Berura 273:22). When this is not

feasible, two minority leniencies are sometimes cited: 1. In cases of need, any food can constitute a “*Kiddush* meal” (Chayei Adam II:6:22); 2. It suffices that one person involved in the *Kiddush* eat the requisite food/amount (see B'Tzel HaChochma IV:2). If relying on such positions, it is best to eat something filling/meal-like, which satisfies at least the “spirit of the law.”

2. **Lechem Mishneh** – Ordinarily, Shabbat meals require two loaves of bread made from halachic grain in a manner that requires *Birkat Hamazon* (Shulchan Aruch Harav, OC 274:5). However, a gluten-sensitive person should view himself as fulfilling the *mitzva* of *seuda* in the best way he can.

It is appropriate (not halachically required) for him to use two gluten-free loaves of “bread.” Treating non-five-grain foods as bread has limited halachic precedent. An *ei-ruv chatzeirot* requires “bread,” yet that bread may be made from rice or lentils (Shulchan Aruch, OC 366:8). Moreover, the requirement of two loaves is derived from the *mana*, which was not grain-based, but was still the bread of Israel. Similarly, rice or potato bread can arguably be considered bread for gluten-free dieters (Mishna Berura ad loc. 47). It is also positive to eat or drink something that will have a *beracha acharona* of *me'ein*

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*shalosh*, which enables him to parallel *Birkat HaMazon* and mention Shabbat.

3. **Seuda shlishit** – The *gemara* (Pesachim 105a) says that one who is eating as Shabbat enters must interrupt his eating to recite *Kiddush*. It suggests that similarly one who is eating as Shabbat ends would have to interrupt the meal for *Havdala*. However, the *gemara* concludes that *Havdala* does not interrupt eating, but only drinking. This *gemara* is the basis for the *halacha* that one who starts *seuda shlishit* before *shki'a* may continue (Shulchan Aruch, OC 299:1).

Can one continue if he is in the middle of a less than complete Shabbat meal (including bread and *Birkat Hamazon*)? The Aruch Hashulchan (OC 299:5) says he may not continue. The Shevet Halevi (VIII, 36), keying on the fact that there are legitimate opinions that one does not need to eat bread at *seuda shlishit* (see Shulchan Aruch, OC 291:5), posits that whatever one uses for *seuda shlishit* will be important enough to allow you to continue.

Therefore, you definitely have whom to rely upon. Actually, non-gluten eaters are better off than others who have *seuda shlishit*

without bread. The Aruch Hashulchan (ibid.), in explaining his stringent opinion, argues that the fact that one did not have bread shows he did not give the meal requisite weight. While one can argue that in contemporary society, where many people rarely eat bread, other serious eating would also count. Regarding health motivated non-gluten dieters, we would expect a near consensus that their regular *seuda shlishit* would allow them to continue after dark, as the lack of bread is not a sign of a less level meal. ■

### Having a dispute?



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