



# B'NAI DAVID-JUDEA

## *Shabbat Shorts*

If you've been to BDJ for an unsponsored Seudah Shlisheet, you know that the culinary requirements for this meal are pretty spartan. (Fortunately we Seudah Shlisheet diehards are drawn by the social / spiritual nourishment .... :) At the same time, requirements do exist, and knowing them enables us to do Seudah Shlisheet right!

There is actually a range of Halachic opinion on this issue, all of which we'll look at here. The grandest vision belongs to Rambam, who states that all three of our Shabbat meals need to be built around wine and Lechem Mishneh (a double portion of bread), as all three meals are equally part of the mitzvah to "delight in Shabbat" (Oneg Shabbat). A debate rages among interpreters of Rambam as to whether he is implying that the "daytime Kiddush" is to be recited again at Seudah Shlisheet (a position not found in the Talmud), or whether he means that wine should simply be enjoyed during the meal. The former interpretation was later adopted in some Kabbalistic / Hasidic circles, who see Seudah Shlisheet as the holiest of all the Shabbat meals, as it is pervaded with a longing for the soon-to-depart Shabbat queen.

While in our practice wine is not typically a feature of Seudah Shlisheet at all, **Lechem Mishneh ideally should be**. The Shulchan Aruch simply and directly states as much. While a good case has also been made that one loaf of bread (or pita) suffices, as: (a) the double portion of manna is a central inspiration for our Lechem Mishneh practice, and...

(b) back in the desert there would only have been one loaf's worth of manna remaining by Shabbat afternoon... nonetheless the Shulchan Aruch concludes that reciting HaMotzi over Lechem Mishneh remains the preference, as this is one of the ways that we distinguish and honor all of our Shabbat meals. (One could even cover the Lechem Mishneh, as we do for the other meals. True, there is no wine to "embarrass" the bread, but the remembrance of the layer of dew atop the manna in the desert is still worth commemorating!)

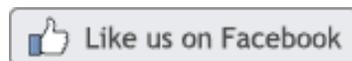
All of this having been said, the tradition of a breadless Seudah Shlisheet unquestionably exists. The text of the Shulchan Aruch speaks for itself on this score. *"One should eat bread at Seudah Shlisheet. And there are those who say that any food made of one of the five types of grain suffices. And there are those who say that meat or fish suffices...and there are those who say that it can even be fruit.... Though the first opinion is the "ikar".*

This variety of options, which is the result of a scouring of the Talmud to find any and every definition of a "meal" in any context, is a testament to the lack of resources that Jews often possessed, and possibly to the Jews' lack of Seudah Shlisheet appetite (in better financial times). And it also serves as the ultimate welcome mat to participating in this Mitzvah. It is a Mitzvah that obligates us all - women and men. Most simply stated, Seudah Shlisheet is the Mitzvah of not allowing Shabbat to simply slip away, rather cherishing and celebrating it down to its last drop.

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