

# AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA)

## AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): GENERAL RULES

### THE FIVE AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA)

#### The Five After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona)

There are five Bracha Achrona blessings on food:

- Al HaMichya
- Al HaGefen
- Al Ha'Eitz
- Borei Nefashot
- Birkat HaMazon.

### AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): LEVELS

#### Levels of After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona)

Like fore-blessings, say the highest level of after-blessing (bracha achrona) that applies.

**NOTE** Although borei nefashot will cover many foods (at least, after the fact), it does NOT cover bread, wine, or mezannot.

### AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): MINIMUM MEASUREMENTS

#### Introduction to After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Minimum Measurements

To say any after-blessing/bracha achrona (al ha'michya, al ha'gafen, al ha'eitz, borei nefashot, or birkat ha'mazon), you must:

- Eat at least the minimum volume (1.3 fl. oz.--39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of solid food within four minutes, or
- Drink at least 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of liquid within 30 seconds.

**NOTE** With hot foods, especially liquids, you are unlikely to be able to swallow a minimum amount in the required time in order to qualify for the after-blessing (bracha achrona).

If Did Not Eat Minimum

Do not say bracha achrona if you did not eat 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml) within four minutes.

If Did Not Drink Minimum

Do not say bracha achrona if you did not drink 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of any potable liquid within 30 seconds.

**NOTE** You may not combine the volume of solid food to liquid food or liquid food to solid food that you ate and drank in order to make the minimum volume for an after-blessing.

If Did Not Eat or Drink Minimum

Size: How To Calculate

Ounces: Weight or Volume

The minimum quantity for saying after-blessings is based on volume, not weight. If you eat a pack of pretzels whose volume is 1.3 fl. oz., even though the label says it only weighs 0.5 oz., you would say an after-blessing of al ha'michya.

## Figuring Volume

### Figuring Volume: Non-Mezonot Foods

You may not include the volume of fish or meat or other foods eaten together with bread or matza in order to reach a total volume of 1 fl. oz., which is required for saying the after-blessing of birkat ha'mazon. However, you may combine the volumes in order to say *borei nefashot*.

### Figuring Volume: Unswallowed Pits/Seeds

When eating foods with seeds or pits (olives, pomegranates, etc.), do not include unswallowed seeds or pits to reach the 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) minimum volume needed to say an after-blessing. You may include only what you have swallowed.

### D'Oraita Cases

For d'oraita cases (halachot from the Torah), such as eating matza at seder or drinking wine for kiddush, we use a more stringent minimum measure:

- Eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of solid food within four minutes, or
- Drink at least 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) of liquid within 30 seconds.

## Timing

### When To Start Counting

You may start counting the period of four minutes (for eating at least 1.3 fl. oz.) or 30 seconds (for drinking at least 3.3 fl. oz.) any time after the fore-blessing as long as it is continuous from when you first swallow until you have swallowed the minimum amount.

## AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): TIME LIMITS

## AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): TIME LIMITS AND SATIATION STATUS

### After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Satiation Status: General Rules

After eating or drinking the required amounts, you may say bracha achrona (including birkat ha'mazon) as long as:

- You are still satiated after having been hungry and eaten, OR
- You were not satiated after eating and it is less than 72 minutes since you finished eating.

**REASON** We say the effects of food last for at least 72 minutes and that 72-minute period overrides becoming hungry again even after having been satiated.

### After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Satiation Status: Hunger Situations

**SITUATION** You were hungry.  
You ate and were satiated.  
You are not yet hungry again.

**WHAT TO DO** You may say bracha achrona without any time limit, until you get hungry again

**SITUATION** You were hungry.  
You ate but were not satiated.  
You are still hungry.

**WHAT TO DO** You may say bracha achrona for up to 72 minutes after having stopped eating.

**SITUATION** You were not hungry, but you ate.

**WHAT TO DO**

- If you ate enough that you became satiated and now you are hungry again:

You can say after-blessing for up to 72 minutes after you finished eating.

- If you ate enough to be satiated and are not yet hungry again:  
You may say an after-blessing for up to 72 minutes OR until you are hungry again, whichever comes later.
- If you ate but did not become satiated and are still hungry:  
You can say after-blessing for 72 minutes after you finished eating.

## AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): TIME LIMITS AND FALLING ASLEEP

### After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Falling Asleep for more than 30 Minutes

If you fell asleep for more than 30 minutes in the middle of a meal:

Step 1: Wash your hands the *Three-Times Method* to remove the *tum'a* of your sleep.

Step 2a: To Continue Eating

To continue eating in this case, since the previous blessings and food are no longer relevant (due to *hesech da'at*), you may:

- Wash again and say *ha'motzi* again, and then say *birkat ha'mazon*, OR
- Eat other items with a fore-blessing and after-blessing (since your previous eating is finished).

Step 2b: If You Are Finished Eating

- Say *birkat ha'mazon* if you are:
  - Finished eating, and
  - Not hungry again, after having been satiated at the meal.
- Do not say *birkat ha'mazon* if you are
  - Finished eating, and
  - Hungry again (after having been satiated at the meal), as the original snack or meal is irrelevant to any after-blessing now.

### After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Falling Asleep for less than 30 Minutes

If you slept less than 30 minutes, you do not need to wash; you may:

- Continue eating your meal, or
- Say *birkat ha'mazon* (as long as you had already eaten at least 1.9 fl. oz., or 56 ml, of bread within 4 minutes).

## AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): CORRESPONDENCE WITH FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA)

### Correspondence between Fore- and After-Blessings

There is no essential connection between fore-blessings and after-blessings.

#### EXAMPLES Rice

The fore-blessing is *borei minei mezonot*, so you might expect the after-blessing to be *al ha'michya*. But the correct after-blessing is *borei nefashot*.

Apple

The fore-blessing is *borei pri ha'eitz*, so you might expect the after-blessing to be *al ha'eitz*. But the correct after-blessing is *borei nefashot*.

## AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): INCORRECT

### Correct After-Blessing after Incorrect After-Blessing

**SITUATION** You ate or drank mez<sub>o</sub>no<sub>t</sub>, wine, grape juice, or any of the Five Special Fruits.

You said the incorrect after-blessing.

**WHAT TO DO** You must still say the correct after-blessing after the incorrect one.

### Correct After-Blessing after Incorrect Fore-Blessing

**SITUATION** You said an incorrect or too-general fore-blessing over food (even *she'hakol*--which does, *b'di'avad*, cover all foods, including bread, wine, the Five Special Fruits, and mez<sub>o</sub>no<sub>t</sub>). Or you forgot to say the fore-blessing.

**WHAT TO DO** You must still say the more-specific, correct after-blessing, including birkat ha'mazon when appropriate.

**REASON** You must still say the correct after-blessing even though you said the incorrect fore-blessing.

## AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): INCOMPLETE

### Incomplete After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona)

You must repeat the after-blessing for mez<sub>o</sub>no<sub>t</sub>, wine/grape juice, or any of the Five Special Fruits if you ate items from more than one of those categories, said the after-blessing for just one of them, and forgot the other.

### Example

**SITUATION** You ate mez<sub>o</sub>no<sub>t</sub> and some figs, said al ha'michya, and forgot to add the words for al ha'eitz.

**WHAT TO DO** You must say the after-blessing al ha'eitz.

## AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): SEQUENTIAL

### After-Blessings If Snack, then New Meal

If you said a fore-blessing and ate a snack, but then decided to eat bread and a full meal:

- If your meal will not contain any foods that have the same after-blessing as your snack--
  - Say the snack's after-blessing, and then
  - Wash your hands and say ha'motzi.
- If your meal will contain foods with the same fore-blessing as your snack (even the same food as your snack)—
  - Do not say the snack's after-blessing.
  - Wash your hands and say ha'motzi.

**NOTE** Wash and say ha'motzi if you will be eating any amount of bread--even less than 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) within four minutes and even if it will take you more than four minutes to eat it (in which case, although you say ha'motzi, you do not say any after-blessing, including birkat ha'mazon).

**NOTE** Say al netilat yadayim only if you intend to eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (59 ml) within four minutes.

**EXCEPTION** If you have eaten mez<sub>o</sub>no<sub>t</sub> (and even if you will not eat any more mez<sub>o</sub>no<sub>t</sub> with your meal), do not say al ha'michya. Just wash your hands, say ha'motzi, and eat your meal.

## AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): CHANGING LOCATION

## AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): CHANGING LOCATION: INSIDE TO OUTSIDE, OUTSIDE TO INSIDE

### After-Blessings: Start Meal Inside, Intend To End Outside

You may start a meal inside the house and finish outside, or the reverse, if that was your original intention. If that was not your original intention, consult a rabbi.

### After-Blessings: Start Snack Inside, Did Not Intend To End Outside

If you were eating a snack inside a building and had not planned to continue eating outside but then decided to eat outside, you must say a new fore-blessing once you are outside.

## AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): CHANGING LOCATION: BREAD OR MEZONOT

### After-Blessings: Changing Location: Continuing To Eat Bread or Mezonot

Because bread or mezonot REQUIRES you to say an after-blessing at the place where you ate it, you are considered to NOT have had an interruption of thought (hesech da'at) when you move and eat more bread or mezonot at the new place, and you may say the after-blessing at the new place.

## AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): CHANGING LOCATION: TRAVELING

### After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Changing Location: Traveling

When traveling, the proper practice is to:

- Finish eating where you begin eating, or
- Intend, when saying the fore-blessing, to continue eating while traveling.

**EXCEPTIONS** Even if you did not intend to continue eating along the way, you may say the after-blessing wherever you are if:

- You are already involved in doing a mitzva, or
- If you will incur a large loss of money, or
- By the time you would return to where you ate, it would be past the latest time to say the after-blessing.

### After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Changing Location: Food within View

**SITUATION** You eat one item outdoors, then eat food from another category inside your car, which is within view of where you ate the first food.

**WHAT TO DO** You may say the after-blessings for both foods while in your car (or both outside of your car), even if it is a food that normally would require you to return to the place at which you ate it.

### After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Changing Location: Did Not Intend To Continue Eating

**SITUATION** You did not, at the time you said the fore-blessing, intend to continue eating along the way. You then ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread or mezonot within four minutes.

**WHAT TO DO** When you say the after-blessing, you should return to where you began eating. However, if you continued eating mezonot or bread while traveling, you may say the after-blessing in either place.

**NOTE** It is the proper practice to say a new fore-blessing (since you did not intend to continue eating along the way when you began eating) in the vehicle in which you are traveling. But even if you did not say a new fore-blessing, you may still say the after-blessing

in the vehicle.

## After-Blessings: Changing Location: Inside Vehicle, Outside Vehicle, Return

**SITUATION** You are traveling (driving, riding in a bus, etc.), and you stop and get out of the vehicle in order to eat part of a meal or snack:

### WHAT TO DO

- If, when you said the fore-blessing, you had consciously intended to return to the vehicle and continue eating either along the way or at the next stop, you may say the after-blessing wherever you are when you finish eating.
- If, when you said the fore-blessing, you had not consciously intended to return to the vehicle and continue eating while traveling, it is assumed that you will continue to eat and you do not need to say a new fore-blessing.
- If you intended NOT to continue eating in your car or along the way, you need to say a new fore-blessing in the vehicle.

## THE FIVE AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA) GENERAL RULES

### I. AL HAMICHYA

#### AL HAMICHYA: TYPE AND VOLUME OF FOODS

##### Al HaMichya: Eating Enough

Say al ha'michya after eating at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of non-bread foods baked from the Five Grains (wheat, rye, oats, barley, or spelt) within four minutes.

##### Al HaMichya: Eating Enough Pie To Say

Say al ha'michya if you ate a total volume of crust + filling of at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) or more within four minutes--even if the total mezannot-based crust you eat is less than 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup).

##### Al HaMichya: Or Birkat HaMazon

Say birkat ha'mazon instead of al ha'michya if you ate enough bread-like foods (mezannot) or bread-like food combinations (such as crackers with tuna salad) to be the volume of your normal biggest meal of the day.

This is true even if:

- You had not planned to have a meal (for example, you planned to eat only one slice of pizza but then ate two more), and
- Did not wash your hands before the meal.

#### AL HAMICHYA: DOUBT

##### Al HaMichya: Doubt If You Said

Don't say al ha'michya after eating mezannot if you are not certain whether you said it or not.

##### Al HaMichya: Doubt If 72 Minutes Have Passed

**SITUATION** You ate some mezannot. It might be more than 72 minutes since you finished eating but you are not certain.

**WHAT TO DO** Doubt about a blessing (safek bracha) does not get a blessing.

**NOTE** You may not eat one of the Five Special Fruits in order to say the after-blessing of al ha'eitz and include al ha'michya. You could eat fruit and say the al ha'eitz blessing, but you may not include mezannot food in the blessing by adding al ha'michya.

# AL HAMICHYA: FORGETTING V'ZACHREINU L'TOVA

## Al HaMichya: Forgetting To Add V'Zachreinu L'Tova

Don't repeat al ha'michya on Rosh Chodesh if you forget to add v'zachreinu l'tova....

## II. AL HAGAFEN

### AL HAGAFEN: TYPE AND VOLUME OF DRINK

#### Al HaGafen: Drinking Enough Wine/Grape Juice To Say After-Blessing

Say al ha'gafen after drinking at least a revi'it (3.3 fl. oz., or 99 ml) of wine (or grape juice) within 30 seconds.

#### Al HaGafen: Covering SheHakol Drink

If you drank at least 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of grape juice or wine water within 30 seconds and then drank some water or another beverage, saying the after-blessing of al ha'gafen on the wine/grape juice covers the water or other beverage.

### AL HAGAFEN: WHICH BLESSING ENDING

#### Al HaGafen: Al Pri HaGafen or Al Pri Gafna

After drinking wine made from grapes grown in Eretz Yisrael (regardless of where you are physically located when you drink the wine), end the after-blessing with al ha'aretz ve'al pri gafna instead of al ha'aretz ve'al pri ha'gafen.

## III. AL HA'EITZ

### INTRODUCTION TO AL HA'EITZ

#### Al Ha'Eitz: Type and Volumes of Fruits

Say the after-blessing of al ha'eitz after eating at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup), within four minutes, of the Five Special Fruits:

- Olive,
- Date,
- Grape,
- Fig,
- Pomegranate.

**NOTE** The after-blessing of al ha'eitz also covers any non-special fruits that you ate while eating the Five Special Fruits.

**SITUATION** You ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) within four minutes of the Five Special Fruits, such as figs, and any amount of non-special fruits, such as walnuts, at about the same time.

**WHAT TO DO** Say:

- Fore-blessing of borei pri ha'eitz, and
- After-blessing of al ha'eitz.

### AL HA'EITZ: FIGURING VOLUME

#### Al Ha'Eitz: Figuring Volume: Eating Special and Non-Special Fruits Sequentially

You may not eat non-special fruits sequentially with or even interspersed with the Five Special Fruits in order to make the minimum volume for saying the after-blessing of al ha'eitz.

**SITUATION** You ate a date and then ate the remainder of 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of cherries.

## WHAT TO DO

Say:

- Fore-blessing of borei pri ha'eitz over the date (and cherries).
- After-blessing of borei nefashot on all the fruits.

### Al Ha'Eitz: Figuring Volume: Eating Special and Non-Special Fruits As a Unit

The volume of special and non-special fruits DO combine for the after-blessing if:

- They are considered to be one food, AND
- The main component is the Special Fruit.

**SITUATION** You eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) within four minutes of dates stuffed with almonds.

## WHAT TO DO

Say the after-blessing of al ha'eitz over both types of fruits.

### Al Ha'Eitz: Figuring Volume: Eating Special Fruits Mixed with Other Foods

**SITUATION** You say borei pri ha'eitz and eat a few olives, but less than 1.3 fl. oz. Then, you say borei pri ha'adama and eat lettuce mixed with enough olives to constitute the minimum volume when combined with the first olives. You eat them all within four minutes. It is time to say the after-blessing.

**WHAT TO DO** You may not combine all the olives in order to say the after-blessing of al ha'eitz unless the olives remain distinct from the lettuce and you continue to eat them separately. Say borei nefashot after finishing eating as long as the total food eaten was at least 1.3 fl. oz.

## AL HA'EITZ: VE'AL HAPEIROT OR VE'AL PEIROTEHA

### Al Ha'Eitz Ve'al HaPeirot or Ve'al Peiroteha

**SITUATION** You ate some of the Five Special Fruits and they were grown in Eretz Yisrael.

**WHAT TO DO** End the after-blessing al ha'eitz with al ha'aretz ve'al peiroteha instead of ve'al ha'peirot.

## IV. BOREI NEFASHOT

### BOREI NEFASHOT: TYPE AND VOLUME OF FOODS

#### Borei Nefashot: Minimum Requirements

Say borei nefashot after:

- Eating at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of non-mezonot food or non-special fruits within four minutes, OR
- Drinking at least 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of non-grape juice drinks or wine within 30 seconds.

#### Borei Nefashot: Special Cases: Popcorn

To say the after-blessing on popcorn, you only need to eat a few popped kernels as long as in the popped state they fill 1 fl. oz. (30 ml).

## V. BIRKAT HAMAZON

### BIRKAT HAMAZON: SOURCE

#### Birkat HaMazon: Torah Source

The source of *birkat ha'mazon* is Deuteronomy/Devarim 8:10: You will eat and be satiated and bless Hashem, your God, for the good land that He gave you.

### **Birkat HaMazon D'Rabanan: Rabbinic Source**

Although the *mitzva d'oraita* is to thank God only when you are satiated from the meal, *chazal* decreed that we say *birkat ha'mazon* even when eating only the volume of a *k'zayit* and even if not satiated. So you must still say *birkat ha'mazon* after eating at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread within four minutes--even if you are not full. This is known as *birkat ha'mazon d'rabanan*.

## **BIRKAT HAMAZON: HOW MUCH FOOD**

### **Eating Enough Bread To Say Birkat HaMazon**

Say *birkat ha'mazon* if you ate a "meal" as defined by *halacha*—that is, if you ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread made of the *Five Grains* within four minutes.

**NOTE** If you didn't eat the minimal amounts within four minutes, don't say *birkat ha'mazon* (even if you washed and said *ha'motzi*).

### **Eating Enough Mezonot To Say Birkat HaMazon**

Say *birkat ha'mazon* after eating *mezonot* if it constituted a meal—that is, if you ate:

- The amount a person would eat for his/her dinner meal, OR
- *Mezonot* in addition to other foods that are normally eaten with bread in a quantity sufficient to be a normal dinner meal.

**NOTE** In either case, you must eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of *mezonot* made of the *Five Grains* within four minutes.

### **Birkat HaMazon: If You Planned To Eat Minimum Amount of Bread and Did**

Regardless of how much bread you plan to eat, if you eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) within four minutes, say *birkat ha'mazon*.

### **Birkat HaMazon: If You Planned To Eat Minimum Amount of Bread and Did Not**

If you planned to, but did not, eat a full meal:

- Do not say *al ha'michya* if you did not eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of foods baked from the *Five Grains* within four minutes--even if you had washed your hands and said *ha'motzi*.
- Do say the appropriate *bracha achrona* for any other foods of which you ate the minimum (1.3 fl. oz.--39 ml, or 1/6 cup) quantity within four minutes, even though you did not say an individual *bracha rishona* (since you were planning to

## **BIRKAT HAMAZON: TIME LIMIT**

### **Birkat HaMazon: Time Limit**

For time limits on *birkat ha'mazon*, see After-Blessings (*Bracha Achrona*): Time Limits.

## **BIRKAT HAMAZON: LOCATION**

### **Birkat HaMazon: Location: Switching Seats**

You should sit down for *birkat ha'mazon*, but you do not need to sit in your original seat. You may sit anywhere in the room in which you ate, even at a different table.

### **Birkat HaMazon: Location: Eating in Two Places--No Prior Intention**

#### **SITUATION**

- You said *ha'motzi*.
- Ate bread without planning to continue your meal elsewhere.

- Then changed your mind and wanted to eat at a second place.

**WHAT TO DO** The ideal practice is to:

- Say *birkat ha'mazon* where you are, and then
- Start a new meal--wash, make *ha'motzi*, and eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup)—of bread in the second place.

*B'di'avad*, it is OK to say *birkat ha'mazon* at the second place, but only if you also ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread at the second place (no additional washing or *ha'motzi* is needed).

### **Birkat HaMazon: Location: Eating in Two Places--Prior Intention**

Say *birkat ha'mazon* at either place if:

- You eat in one place, intending to continue your meal in another place, AND
- You ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread at either place.

**NOTE** If you intend to eat only a snack only at the second place, you do not need to say *birkat ha'mazon* before you go there; you only need to say whichever fore-blessings are required for the foods you will eat there. You must return to the first place to say *birkat ha'mazon*.

## **BIRKAT HAMAZON: MAYIM ACHRONIM**

### **Mayim Achronim a Custom?**

Many people have the custom of using *mayim achronim* (water to wash hands after a meal). But according to some opinions, to do so is not required by Jewish law.

**NOTE** According to most opinions, women do not wash with *mayim achronim*.

## **BIRKAT HAMAZON: MEZUMAN AND MINYAN**

### **Birkat HaMazon: Reason for Mezuman**

Saying *birkat ha'mazon* with a *mezuman* (or a *minyan*) is important since it gives honor to God.

### **Birkat HaMazon: Seating for Minyan or Mezuman**

You may join with other men to make a *minyan* or *mezuman* (a *mezuman* is any group of 3 or more Jewish men 13 years old or older and so a *minyan* is also a kind of *mezuman*) for *birkat ha'mazon* if, while you are eating:

- You can see any other tables at which the other men are eating, or
- You had the same waiter as the other men, even if you could not see the rest of the group (such as in an L-shaped room).

### **Birkat HaMazon: Eating for Mezuman**

Say *birkat ha'mazon* as a *mezuman* if:

- You don't have enough men for a *minyan* (see above), AND
- Two men wash, said *ha'motzi*, and ate bread, AND
- One or more other men ate any food other than water and salt.

**NOTE** If the three men's eating overlapped in time with each other, they MAY say *birkat ha'mazon* with a *mezuman*.

If the three men began eating at the same time, they MUST say birkat ha'mazon with a mezuman.

### **Birkat HaMazon: Eating for Minyan**

You may say birkat ha'mazon with a minyan if:

- At least seven men washed, said ha'motzi, and ate bread, with
- Enough other men who ate some food (anything other than water or salt) to total 10 men.

**NOTE** If the 10 men's eating overlapped in time with each other, they MAY say birkat ha'mazon with a minyan.

If the 10 men began eating at the same time, they MUST say birkat ha'mazon with a minyan.

### **Birkat HaMazon: Women's Mezuman and Minyan**

Women (even if 10 or more) do not make a minyan, only a mezuman. So do not say the birkat ha'mazon's minyan introduction but simply say the mezuman introduction if:

- 10 or more women ate together, without men present;
- At least two women washed, said ha'motzi, and ate bread; AND
- At least one more woman ate some type of food.

**NOTE** Women are never required to make a mezuman. So when three women are eating together and no men are present, they may say birkat ha'mazon as a mezuman but they are not required to do so.

### **Birkat HaMazon: Until When To Join Mezuman**

You may join a mezuman by eating any food (except water and salt) up until the leader says "rabotai nevareich."

### **Birkat HaMazon: How To Join Mezuman and Continue Eating**

To join a mezuman and continue eating:

- 1) Reply to "rabotai nevareich," etc.,
- 2) Say amen after the leader says the first paragraph's final blessing, and then
- 3) Finish eating and say birkat ha'mazon on your own.

### **Birkat HaMazon: How Many Men Needed for Baruch Hu U'Varuch Shemo**

Say baruch hu u'varuch shemo before birkat ha'mazon even if only three men are present; you don't need a minyan.

**NOTE** Only the leader (mezamein) says this, not the other two men.

### **Birkat HaMazon: Standing Up to Honor God**

Stand up a little to honor God when you say God's name in the introduction (nevareich eloheinu) if you ate with 10 men. This is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

## **BIRKAT HAMAZON: TABLE**

### **BIRKAT HAMAZON: KNIVES ON TABLE**

#### **Birkat HaMazon: Covering Knife on Shabbat**

You do not need to cover or remove a knife on the table before saying birkat ha'mazon on Shabbat.

#### **Birkat HaMazon: Covering Knife on Weekdays**

Cover or remove a sharp knife from the table on weekdays before saying birkat ha'mazon. This is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

### **BIRKAT HAMAZON: BREAD ON TABLE**

## Birkat HaMazon: Replacing Bread

Place the bread back onto the table before saying *birkat ha'mazon* if the bread had been removed during the meal. This is a non-binding custom, not a *halacha*.

NOTE This is true for any meal, not just for *Shabbat*.

## BIRKAT HAMAZON: WHEN TO REPEAT

### Birkat HaMazon: When To Repeat If Forgot Additions

When saying *birkat ha'mazon*, you must repeat *birkat ha'mazon* if you forgot:

- *Retzei* on the first two meals of *Shabbat*.
- *Ya'aleh v'yavo* on the first two meals of any *Jewish festival* day (women only repeat if they forgot it at the *Passover seder*).

Never repeat *birkat ha'mazon* if you forgot additions for:

- *Rosh Hashana* (during the daytime) or
- *Rosh Chodesh*.

## BIRKAT HAMAZON: ALTERNATE WORDINGS

### BA'ALAT HABAYIT HAZEH

#### Ba'alat HaBayit HaZeh: Woman Head of Household

Say *ba'alat ha'bayit ha'zeh* if the head of the household is a woman.

### BRACHA MERUBA BABAYIT HAZEH

#### Bracha Meruba BaBayit HaZeh: Inside Jewish Home

Say *bracha meruba ba'bayit ha'zeh* only when eating in a house or apartment that is occupied by a Jewish family or a Jewish owned public building.

#### Bracha Meruba BaBayit HaZeh: Outside Jewish Home

If eating outside a Jewish home, including when eating outdoors, say (instead of *bracha meruba...*):  
*Ha'rachaman hu yishlach lanu bracha meruba b'halichateinu uv'yeshivateinu ad olam.*

## MIGDOL OR MAGDIL

### Birkat HaMazon on Musaf Days: Migdol or Magdil

Say *migdol* (*yeshuot*) on days when we say *musaf* (on other days, say *magdil*).

### Birkat HaMazon Once Shabbat Ends: Migdol or Magdil

When saying *birkat ha'mazon* after *Shabbat* until *halachic* midnight (*chatzot*), say *migdol*, not *magdil*.

NOTE This also applies to *birkat ha'mazon* after *Jewish festivals* or *Rosh Chodesh*--all days when we say *musaf*.

## VE'AL SHULCHAN ZEH SHEACHALNU ALAV

### Ve'al Shulchan Zeh SheAchalnu Alav When Alone

Say *she'achalnu* (in the plural) even if you are alone.

### Ve'al Shulchan Zeh SheAchalnu Alav If No Table

Skip *ve'al shulchan zeh she'achalnu alav* if there is no table.

## YA'ALEH V'YAVO

### If You Forgot Ya'aleh V'Yavo

#### SITUATION

You forgot to say *ya'aleh v'yavo* in *birkat ha'mazon* for a meal that you were required to eat on a Jewish festival.

#### WHAT TO DO

If you have already begun the fourth blessing, you must repeat the entire *birkat ha'mazon*. If you have not yet said the fourth blessing, you may say a special addition that appears in many *siddurim*.