BLESSINGS/BRACHOT

SEE ALL BLESSINGS

See All Blessings

To see all blessings, see Blessings & Prayers.

INTRODUCTION TO BLESSINGS (BRACHOT)

Introduction to Blessings/Brachot

Blessings as Thanks

We say blessings as thanks to God for the good we receive from Him; this is a form of acknowledging and expressing gratitude (*hakarat ha'tov*).

Having an appreciation for the physical world and the beauty and goodness in it is a means of relating to God through Creation. People can maintain a continual awareness of, and relationship with, God by saying blessings:

- Before and after eating,
- After waking in the morning,
- At various types of life experiences, and
- In many other situations.

Blessings Formulations

Some blessings begin with Baruch ata *adonai* only; some blessings continue with eloheinu melech ha'olam. The shorter blessings come at the end of long (compound) blessings.

REASON There is no mention of malchut at the end of a blessing.

How To Say Blessings

When saying blessings or prayers, it is generally best to say the words of the blessing or prayer out loud since doing so can help you to concentrate on what is being said. (The main exception is the *amida* prayer.)

Normally, you should stand while saying blessings before doing a *mitzva*, unless the *mitzva* is done while seated (in which case you sit when saying the blessing).

REASON So there is no delay between saying the blessing and doing the *mitzva*.

NOTE Although there is not necessarily any need to stand while doing *mitzvot*, many *mitzvot* are done while standing due to the nature of the *mitzva* or for convenience.

If you find you have made an error in saying a blessing or prayer, you may correct your error without having to repeat any previous parts if you do so within 2.5 seconds of having made the error.

NOTE Blessings (*brachot*) and Prayers (*tefilot*) are in separate sections in this website, even though prayers have blessings within them.

BLESSINGS: CATEGORIES

Three Main Categories of Blessings

There are three main categories of blessings:

1. Enjoyment (*birchot nehenin*), such as on foods and scents.
2. Praise and Thanks to God (*shevach v'hoda'a*), such as when saying *she'hecheyanu*, on seeing mountains and the sea, or when good happens to us.

3. Commandments/*Mitzvot* (*birchot mitzva*), such as reading the *Torah*, using the *lulav*, or lighting *Shabbat* candles.

BLESSINGS: GENERAL RULES

BLESSINGS: DOUBT (SAFEK) WHETHER YOU SAID

If Doubt Whether You Said a Blessing (except for Birkat HaMazon)

If you are not sure if you said ANY blessing in ANY category, don't repeat it.

EXCEPTIONS

- *Birkat ha'mazon.*
- You may also include the first blessing over reading the *Torah* (*Asher bachar banu mi'kol ha'amim.)*

Even the blessing for *mezonot* is not an exception.

REASON The only blessing commanded in the *Torah* is *birkat ha'mazon* (some say also the blessings on the *Torah*); all others are from *Chazal*.

If Doubt Whether You Said Birkat HaMazon

Say *birkat ha'mazon* if:

- You are not certain that you said *birkat ha'mazon,* and
- You were satiated from your meal.

NOTE You are considered to be "satiated" after eating food if you no longer have an appetite.

If Doubt Whether You Said Blessings on Torah Study

If you are not certain that you have said any of the morning blessings on studying *Torah* (from *la'asok b'divrei Torah* to *notein haTorah*), you should not say them later. But when you say "*ahava raba*" before the morning *shema*, you may intend it to cover such blessings; then after the *amida*, you should say some *Torah* verses *(psukim)*.

BLESSINGS: SAYING FOR SOMEONE ELSE

Blessings: For Someone Else: Mitzva/Birchot Mitzva

You may say any blessing on a *mitzva*—such as *kiddush*, *hallel*, *Torah*—for another person, even if you have already fulfilled the *mitzva* for yourself, as long as that other person is required to do that *mitzva*.

EXAMPLE Girls (12 years old and more) and women must fulfill all of the positive commandments of *Shabbat* including *kiddush*. So even after they have already said *kiddush* for themselves, they may say *kiddush* for other Jews, including adult men.

EXCEPTION You may not say *birkat ha'mazon* for someone else.

Blessings: For Someone Else: Pleasure/Birchot Nehenin and Praise-Thanks/Shevach V'Hoda'a

You may say these blessings for someone else only if you also need to say the blessing for yourself:

- Blessings for Enjoyment ("*birchot nehenin*"—such as for food or drink), and
- Blessings of Praise and Thanks (*shevach v'hoda'a*--such as on rainbows or seeing large mountains)

BLESSINGS: ANSWERING AMEN

Blessings: Answering Amen: What To Hear

When someone is saying a blessing on your behalf, you may say *amen* as long as you have heard at least:

- The first six words of the blessing; and
- At least a few words of substance in the middle of the blessing; and
- The complete final line.

EXAMPLE For the *al ha'michya* blessing, you must hear:

- The first six words,
- *Al ha'michya,* and
- The final blessing line.

BLESSINGS: CORRECTING A MISTAKEN BLESSING

Correcting a Mistaken Blessing

If you make a mistake when saying any blessing or in any prayer, you may correct it within 2.5 seconds by simply saying the correct blessing.

NOTE If you did not correct the blessing within 2.5 seconds, see next *halacha*:

Retracting a Blessing after Third or Fourth Word

If you start an incorrect blessing:

- If you have said the third word (God's name), say *lamdeini chukecha.*
- If you have already said the third syllable of the fourth word (*elohei…*), say *Yisrael avinu mei'olam v'ad olam.*
- If you said more than the third syllable of the fourth word, say *Baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed*.

BLESSINGS: HOW MANY TO SAY

100 Blessings on Weekdays

Try to say 100 blessings a day. This is easy on weekdays since *Ashkenazim* say about 89 blessings just in the prayer services.

NOTE Saying 100 blessings each day is a *halacha* drabanan.

100 Blessings on Shabbat and Jewish Festivals

On *Shabbat* and some *Jewish festivals*, you might want to fulfill some of the quota for making 100 blessings by:

- Eating extra fruit or other foods,
- Hearing and saying *amen* to the blessings over the:
  - *Torah* reading,
  - Reader's repetition of the *amida* for *shacharit* and *musaf*, and
  - *Haftara* by the *maftir*.

BLESSINGS: TYPES

BLESSINGS: MORNING (BIRCHOT HASHACHAR)

Morning Blessings (Birchot HaShachar)

In the morning blessings, say *she'asa li kol tzarki* even if you are not wearing shoes (even on *Tish'a B'Av* morning).

BLESSINGS: FOOD

BLESSINGS: FOOD: GENERAL RULES

FOOD WHEN NO ONE WILL BLESS

Food When No One Will Bless: Feeding

You should feed a poor Jew, even if he or she won't say a blessing on the food. If a Jew is not poor, you should not give him or her food unless he or she (or someone else--it could be yourself) says a blessing on it for him/her.

NOTE If someone else says the blessing for the poor person, the person saying the blessing must also eat some of that food.

Food When No One Will Bless: Selling

You may sell food to Jews even if they will not make a blessing over it (you may of course sell to non-Jews since they are not required to say a blessing on it!).

FOOD FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA)

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA): GENERAL RULES

FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): PRIORITIES

Fore-Blessings (Bracha Rishona): Priorities

You must say the blessing which was designed to be said on each type of food. *B'diavad*, a lower level blessing will still cover the food.
From lowest to highest level, here are the food fore-blessings:

- *She'hakol*,
- *Borei pri ha'adama*,
- *Borei pri ha'eitz* (on common fruits),
- *Borei pri ha'eitz* (on the *Five Special Fruits*)

NOTE You will only say *borei pri ha'eitz* ONCE to include both common fruits and also special fruits that you will eat at one sitting,

- *Borei minei mezonot*,
- *Borei pri ha'gafen*, and
- *Ha'motzi lechem min ha'aretz*.

Fore-Blessings (Bracha Rishona): Which Level To Say

In general, say the highest-level fore-blessing (*bracha rishona*) on a food.

NOTE As some foods get processed by cooking or by other means, they qualify for a higher-level blessing.

EXAMPLES

- Raw, rolled oats only merit the fore-blessing of *she'hakol*. But once the oats are cooked, the blessing of *borei minei mezonot* applies.

NOTE Raw oats could get the fore-blessing *borei pri ha'adama*, since they grow directly in the earth. But because oats are not normally considered edible when raw, they get demoted to *she'hakol*.

- A raw grape or raisin gets the blessing of *borei pri ha'eitz*. But once made into wine or grape juice, it merits *borei pri ha'gafen*.

FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): MINIMUM MEASUREMENTS

FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): MINIMUM QUANTITY

On How Much Food To Say Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona)

Always say one of the six fore-blessings (*bracha rishona*) before eating, as long as you expect to get enjoyment or benefit from whatever you ate, even when eating:

- Less than a minimal quantity (minimal *shiur*), or
- Eating a small (*kolshehu*) amount of food.

EXAMPLES

- Say a fore-blessing before you taste food you are cooking.
- Say a fore-blessing before you taste a tiny amount of honeysuckle nectar.

EXCEPTION Do not say a fore-blessing on water that you drink with medicine.

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA): TIME LIMIT

Until When May You Eat without a New Fore-Blessing

You may continue eating without saying a new fore-blessing--without a time limit--as long as you are not involved in some other activity that distracts you from eating (*hesech da'at).*

Example

SITUATION You are eating and take a break to do work for your business or read a magazine article that involves your concentration.

WHAT TO DO You may not continue eating unless you say a new fore-blessing.

NOTE This is true whether you became full at any time or not.

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA): FOOD CATEGORIES

One Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona) per Food Category

Your fore-blessing covers all other same-category foods that you will eat at the same time (same sitting), if:

1. They are in front of you when you say the blessing, OR
2. You intend your blessing to cover all other same-category foods that you own and will eat at the same sitting--even if they are not in front of you when you make the blessing.

   NOTE You do not need to state your intention out loud, just think it. If you usually have this intention but you forgot on an occasion, you do not need to say new blessings on the subsequent foods of that type that you already own.

Examples in Your Home

- You say she'hakol over two kinds of she'hakol foods on your table. The blessing also covers a third she'hakol food in your refrigerator and a fourth in your pantry that you know you own.

- You say she'hakol and are eating an omelette when a visitor brings you a gift of chocolates: you must say a new she'hakol]blessing before eating the chocolates.

NOTE Anytime your spouse is serving you food, it is assumed that your initial fore-blessings will cover all food that you will eat.

Examples outside Your Home

- Guest at Someone's Home
  Whenever you are a guest at someone else's house, it is assumed that whatever foods you will eat, will be covered by your initial fore-blessing as long as they are in the same category.
- Attendee at *Kiddush* or Wedding
  If you say she'hakol over fish at a *kiddush* or wedding, the blessing covers all she'hakol foods in the room.
- Diner in Restaurant
  If you have made an order in a restaurant, all ordered foods will be covered by your first fore-blessing(s). However, if you later order more food, even if the fore-blessings are the same, you must still say a new fore-blessing.

FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): HAMOTZI AND DESSERTS

Fore-Blessings (Bracha Rishona): HaMotzi and Desserts

For details on HaMotzi and desserts, see Which Foods HaMotzi Covers.

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA): IDENTIFIABLE PRODUCE

Which Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona) on Identifiable Produce

Say *borei pri ha'eitz* or *borei pri ha'adama* for foods made of identifiable pieces of fruit or vegetables.

NOTE Even if you know the ingredients in a prepared food--such as grated apples--you must see identifiable pieces in order to say a specific blessing (*borei pri ha'eitz*, *borei pri ha'adama*...). If no ingredients are visually identifiable, you must say *she'hakol* (or possibly *borei minei mezonot*).

EXAMPLE Say *borei pri ha'adama* on a potato *kugel* with coarsely ground potatoes; if the potatoes are pulverized, say *she'hakol*.

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA): WHEN NOT THIRSTY

Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona) When Drinking To Prevent Thirst

Do not say a blessing on water that you drink before you are thirsty in order to prevent thirst later.

Fore-Blessing When Drinking To Swallow Pill

Do not say a blessing if you drink water in order to swallow pills.

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA): FORGETTING

Fore-Blessing If Forgot Whether You Said After-Blessing

SITUATION You ate some food and do not remember whether you had said the after-blessing. Now you want to eat or drink more food:

WHAT TO DO Depends on if what you want to eat or drink is water:

- Not Water:
  - If the food or drink had been in front of you when you had said the blessing before, do not say it again.

- If the food or drink was not in front of you and was also not available to you when you said the first fore-blessing, say a new fore-blessing.

- Water (after having drunk water earlier in the same place):
  If you are not certain whether you had said the after-blessing and even if you definitely did NOT say the after blessing, do not say a new fore-blessing.

  REASON Water is always considered to be in front of you (in the water pipe).

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA): INCORRECT BLESSING

Incorrect Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona) If Food Is/Is Not before You

SITUATION You say the incorrect blessing over food in front of you but you also have a food in front of you that does fit the blessing.

WHAT TO DO You may eat the food covered by your actual blessing, and then say the correct blessing for the food you originally intended to eat.

NOTE You may not go into a different room to find food that qualifies for the incorrect food blessing. You should instead say *Baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed* as soon as possible.

NOTE There is no specific time limit beyond which you may no longer say *Baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed*.

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA): CHANGING LOCATION

Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona): Changing Location

The fore-blessing *(bracha rishona)* must be said where you eat. However, sometimes you may begin eating in one domain and continue eating in another domain. A domain may be any physically limited area (car, house, restaurant, office building) or the outdoors (highway, park, etc.). Once you left the first place, you are considered to have had an interruption of thought (*hesech da'at*) and are no longer eating that original snack or meal.
Whether you say a new fore-blessing depends on your intention when you said the fore-blessing:

- Do not say a new fore-blessing if you had intended to go to the second place, as long as the food at the second place is in the same food categories as what you already blessed on at the first place.
- Say a new fore-blessing if you had not intended to continue eating in the second domain, even if you had planned to return to that first place and continue eating.

  EXCEPTION You do not need to make a new fore-blessing if:

  - You return to the first place and even one person who was eating with you is still there, OR
  - You had eaten bread or *mezonot* and then left but had not said the after-blessings of *birkat ha'mazon* or *al ha'michya*, even if no one is left from before.

    REASON Since you are required to say *birkat ha'mazon* or *al ha'michya*, you are still considered to be continuing your meal.

    NOTE As long as you are under the same roof, do not say new blessings on food at the new place (such as when switching seats or even rooms in a restaurant).

    EXCEPTION Even if you washed your hands and said *ha'motzi* at the first place, say a new blessing on food that would have required a new blessing at the first place, such as new wine or any dessert other than *mezonot*.

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA) IN VAIN (BRACHA L'VATALA)

Making a Conditional Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona)

To avoid making a blessing in vain (*bracha l'vatala*), you may intend a fore-blessing to cover all other foods of that category that you will eat at the same time.

NOTE You may make the condition:

- Each time you eat, or
- Once and intend it to apply to all future instances.

NOTE You then do NOT say new fore-blessings on these new same-category foods.

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA): LIQUID FROM FOODS

Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona): Liquid from Food

When you have said a fore-blessing on one type of food, such as *borei pri ha'adama* on vegetables, you do not need to say *she'hakol* on the liquid that remains after having eaten the solid vegetables.

REASON The fore-blessing covers all components, even if they are not the same classification.
NOTE If you ate the vegetables, said the after-blessing, and then later came back and drank the liquid, you would need to say *she'hakol*.

THE FOOD FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): SPECIFICS

I. HAMOTZI

HAMOTZI: WHICH FOODS GET HAMOTZI

HaMotzi on Bread Made of the Five Grains

Wash the *One-Time Method* and say *ha'motzi* on bread made of the Five Grains (wheat, rye, oats, barley, or spelt), even if you will not eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) within four minutes.

NOTE Say the blessing al netilat yadayim on washing hands ONLY if you will eat at least 1.9. fl. oz. (56 ml) of bread within four minutes.

NOTE If you eat less than 1.3 fl. oz. of bread of the Five Grains, do not say birkat ha'mazon or any other after-blessing.

FORE-BLESSING: BREAD-LIKE FOODS

Fore-Blessing: Bread or Mezonot

To be halachically considered "bread," the item must have been baked and have air holes in it. To determine whether a food made of the *Five Grains* qualifies as bread (*ha'motzi)* or *mezonot* (*borei minei mezonot),* decide whether the food had been made to be eaten as a meal or as a snack. If it was made to be:

- Bread (that is, for a meal), say *ha'motzi*.
- *Mezonot* (but you will eat a full meal), say *ha'motzi*.
- A snack, say *borei minei mezonot*.

NOTE Some foods may qualify as either *ha'motzi* or *mezonot* (such as pizza).

NOTE If at least 20% of a bread's flour is from one of the Five Grains, say a fore-blessing of ha'*motzi* on the bread (and birkat ha'mazon afterward, if you ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. within four minutes).

NOTE Whether the bread/*mezonot* was made with fruit juice instead of water may not affect its blessing, since the blessing is determined by its intended use. *Mezonot* rolls on airline flights may still require the blessing of *ha'motzi* if you eat them as part of a meal.

NOTE Since it does not have air holes, wheat tortillas get the blessing of *mezonot* and not *ha'motzi*.

NOTE The fore-blessing on stuffing made of bread or a bread *kugel* is *mezonot* if none of the pieces are 1 fl. oz. or larger.

Fore-Blessing: Small Amount of Pizza/Other Bread-Like Mezonot

SITUATION You will eat less than 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of pizza or other bread-like *mezonot*) within four minutes.

WHAT TO DO Wash your hands using the *One-Time Method,* but do not say al netilat yadayim. Then say borei minei *mezonot.*

Fore-Blessing: Sprouted Wheat Bread

For the fore-blessing on sprouted wheat bread, say:

- *Ha'motzi* if the grains are more like wheat grains than sprouts.

  NOTE If the sprout still has any part of the original grain, excluding the husk, it is still considered to be grain and the fore-blessing is *ha'motzi*.

- *She'hakol* if the grains were sprouted in water without soil.

Fore-Blessing: Bread/Cakes of Only Rice Flour

Bread or cakes made of only rice flour may not be used for any meal requiring eating bread and saying *birkat ha'mazon.* The blessing is *borei minei mezonot*, not *ha'motzi*.

Fore-Blessing: Bread/Cakes of Rice Flour and Mezonot Flour

In a bread containing rice flour, if at least 20% of the flour is from one of the *Five Grains*, say the fore-blessing of *ha'motzi* (after-blessing: *birkat ha'mazon).*

In a cake containing mostly rice flour, if at least 20% of the flour is from one of the *Five Grains*, say a fore-blessing of *borei minei mezonot* (after-blessing: *al ha'michya*).

Fore-Blessing: Unbaked Dough

For the fore-blessing on cooked (but unbaked) dough, see Fore-Blessing: Cooked Dough/Pasta.

Fore-Blessing: Bulgur Wheat/Tabouli

The fore-blessing on bulgur wheat (such as *tabouli*) is *borei minei mezonot*.

HAMOTZI: WHICH FOODS HAMOTZI COVERS

Which Foods HaMotzi Covers

Ha'motzi always covers all food eaten as part of a meal, except wine and any non-*mezonot* desserts such as fruit, on all days (not just on *Shabbat* or *Jewish festivals)*.

Desserts that HaMotzi Does Not Cover

Non-*mezonot* dessert foods (which often have a sweet taste) are not normally eaten with bread. Say fore-blessings on desserts at a meal (for which you have already said *ha'motzi* and eaten bread) only on:

- Fruit from “trees”(*borei pri ha'eitz*),
- Fruit from the ground (*borei pri ha'adama*), such as melons and strawberries, and
- Specialty items (*she'hakol*), such as ice cream.

HAMOTZI: WASHING HANDS

HaMotzi: Washing Hands: When To Wash

Before eating bread, you must always wash your hands.

NOTE If you do not plan to eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of bread within four minutes, wash but do not say the blessing *al netilat yadayim.*

HaMotzi: Washing Hands: Finding Water

To find water for washing hands before eating bread:

- You must travel or walk up to 18 minutes away to find water.
- If you are already traveling, you must continue up to 72 minutes (in the direction in which you are going anyway) to find water.
- If you still cannot find water, cover your hands with any type of separation (gloves, sheet of plastic, bag, foil, or some other object) to keep your hands from directly contacting the bread.

HaMotzi: Washing Hands: Finding 4 fl. oz. Container

SITUATION You do not have a washing cup of at least 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) and you need to wash hands after sleeping or before eating bread.

STATUS You may not substitute a smaller washing container (such as a 2 fl. oz./59 ml cup) and use it twice.

WHAT TO DO You must travel up to 18 minutes away to get such a container when needed.

NOTE If you have a spigot that is less than 12 inches above the ground, you may open the spigot and let at least 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) flow out, close the tap, reopen it, and repeat.

HaMotzi: Washing Hands: Procedure

To wash for *ha'motzi*, use the *One-Time Method*, *see* How To Wash Hands the *One-Time Method*.

HaMotzi: Being Touched by Unwashed Hands

SITUATION Someone who has not yet washed touches your hand after you have washed your hands, said *al netilat yadayim*, and dried your hands.

STATUS

- If his/her hand is dry, there is no problem of transferring impurity.
- If his/her hand is wet, this may have transferred ritual impurity to your hand.

WHAT TO DO

- If his/her hand is wet, touch a normally covered part of your body and then rewash your hands and say the blessing on washing hands.

  NOTE If you have already said *ha'motzi*, don't repeat the *ha'motzi* blessing.

HaMotzi: Speaking after Washing

SITUATION You washed your hands in order to eat bread. You spoke before saying *hamotzi*.

WHAT TO DO You do not need to wash your hands again.
You do not need to say the blessing on washing hands again.

HaMotzi: Forgot To Wash

SITUATION **Y**ou said *ha'motzi* without having washed your hands first.

WHAT TO DO Up until the time you say *birkat ha'mazon*, you must interrupt your meal and wash your hands.

NOTE Say *al netilat yadayim* ONLY if you will still eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of bread afterward; if you will eat less than 1.9 fl. oz., wash without a blessing.

HAMOTZI: LIFTING THE BREAD

HaMotzi: When To Lift the Bread

When saying *ha'motzi*, lift the bread when saying God's name. This is a non-binding custom, not a *halacha*.

HAMOTZI: INTERRUPTED MEAL/HESECH DA'AT

Washing Your Hands for Interrupted Meal

SITUATION You said *ha'motzi*, ate any amount of bread, interrupted your meal and forgot about it, and now wish to resume your meal and eat more bread.

WHAT TO DO Wash your hands again and say the blessing on washing hands.

NOTE There is no time limit for this; whenever you forget about the meal, you must rewash before eating more bread. However, you do not say *ha'motzi* if it is within the allowed time to say *birkat ha'mazon*.

HAMOTZI: SHABBAT

HaMotzi: Shabbat

For *HaMotzi* on *Shabbat*, see *Shabbat*: Two Loaves (*Lechem Mishneh*).

II. BOREI MINEI MEZONOT

BOREI MINEI MEZONOT: GENERAL RULES

Introduction to Borei Minei Mezonot

Say the fore-blessing *borei minei mezonot* on non-bread foods if:

- Grain
  The *Five Grains* (wheat, rye, oats, barley, or spelt) make up at least 20% of the food's flour volume, AND
- Cooking Method
  Food is cooked or baked, AND

- Meal or Snack
  You intend to eat the food as a snack and not a meal.

NOTE If you intend to eat a full meal that includes *mezonot* of a cake-like or bread-like texture, say *ha'motzi*.
For basing the fore-blessing on the main or preferential ingredient in a food mixture and/or saying two fore-blessings, see Fore-Blessings (*Bracha Rishona*): Food Mixtures: Main Ingredient and Introduction to Food Fore-Blessings (*Bracha Rishona*): The Five Grains.

BOREI MINEI MEZONOT: WHICH GRAINS

FORE-BLESSING: WHICH GRAINS: NON-FIVE GRAINS: IN WHOLE OR IN PART

Fore-Blessing: Which Grains: Non-Five Grains: In Whole or In Part

Say the fore-blessing *borei pri ha'adama* (not *borei minei mezonot*) on cooked or baked foods:

- If the *Five Grains* make up less than 20% of the food's flour volume, OR
- If made of non-*Five Grains*, such as corn, millet, or quinoa.

NOTE Rice is an exception; see next entry.

Fore-Blessing: Which Grains: Non-Five Grains: Rice

Rice (including rice bread and rice pasta) gets the fore-blessing *borei minei mezonot*, but not the after-blessing of *al ha'michya* (after-blessing: *borei nefashot*), even if you ate an entire meal of rice.

Fore-Blessing: Which Grains: Non-Five Grains: Tortillas

For corn tortillas (most tortillas are corn tortillas), say the fore-blessing *she'hakol* (after-blessing: *borei nefashot*).
For wheat tortillas, say the fore-blessing *borei minei mezonot* (after-blessing: *al ha'michya*).

FORE-BLESSING: WHICH GRAINS: NON-FIVE GRAINS: MEZONOT/NON-MEZONOT COMBINATIONS

Fore-Blessing: Which Grains: Mezonot/Non-Mezonot Combinations: Ice Cream Cone

The fore-blessing for ice cream cones depends on which part you prefer to eat:

SITUATION 1 You like the ice cream more than the cone and would eat it without the cone.
WHAT TO DO Say the fore-blessing of *she'hakol.*
NOTE *She'hakol* covers the cone.

After-blessing

- *Borei nefashot* if you eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup--including cone, if you eat the cone) within four minutes.
- No blessing if you eat less than 1.3 fl. oz. in four minutes.

SITUATION 2 You like the cone and the ice cream equally.
WHAT TO DO Say *borei minei mezonot* (this will cover the ice cream).
After-blessing

- *Al ha' michya* if you eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup of ice cream plus cone) within four minutes.
- No blessing if you eat less than 1.3 fl. oz. in four minutes.

SITUATION 3 The cone is sweet and you ALSO like the ice cream as much as the cone.
WHAT TO DO

- Say *she'hakol* on the ice cream.

- When you get to the cone, add *borei minei mezonot.*

After-blessing

- *Borei nefashot.*
- Also say *al ha'michya* if the cone totaled at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) and you ate it within four minutes.

Fore-Blessing: Which Grains: Mezonot/Non-Mezonot Combinations: Pie

Normally, for a pie say:

Fore-Blessing

Fore-blessing of *borei minei mezonot*, even if it contains less than 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of flour.

After-Blessing

To say the after-blessing, *al ha'michya*, you must eat a total volume of at least 1.3 fl. oz.--even if the flour was a minority of the ingredients.

However, if you prefer the filling to the crust (if you would not eat the crust by itself), say the appropriate fore-blessing over the filling, such as:

- *She'hakol* (after-blessing: *borei nefashot*), or
- *Borei pri ha'eitz* (after-blessing if on more than 1.3 fl. oz. of the *Five Special Fruits*--figs, dates, grapes, or pomegranates: *al ha'eitz*.

Fore-Blessing: Which Grains: Mezonot/Non-Mezonot Combinations: Turkey with Bread Stuffing

SITUATION You will eat bread stuffing with turkey. The bread stuffing has at least one chunk of bread at least 1.3 fl. oz. in volume.

WHAT TO DO Wash and say *ha'motzi*. If you eat at least 1.3 fl oz of the stuffing, say *birkat ha'mazon* afterward.

SITUATION You will eat bread stuffing with turkey. There is NOT at least one chunk of bread at least 1.3 fl. oz. in volume.

WHAT TO DO Do not wash and say *ha'motzi*, and do not say *birkat ha'mazon* (unless you eat enough to constitute a full meal). However, if you enjoy the stuffing as much as the turkey or will eat some stuffing by itself, say *borei minei mezonot.*

BOREI MINEI MEZONOT: WHICH COOKING METHODS

FORE-BLESSING: COOKED DOUGH

Fore-Blessing: Cooked Dough/Pasta

Bread must be baked in order to say *ha'motzi* on it ; dough that was cooked by any method other than baking (such as pasta) gets the fore-blessing of *borei minei mezonot*.

NOTE Even if you eat enough to constitute a meal, you still say *al ha'michya* afterward.

FORE-BLESSING: FRIED BREAD BATTER

Fore-Blessing: French Toast

See Bread/*Mezonot*: Mixtures with Other Foods.

FORE-BLESSING: RAW OR COOKED GRAINS

Fore-Blessing: Raw or Cooked Grains: Porridge/Oatmeal

If oatmeal is porridge, say *borei minei mezonot* (after-blessing, *al ha'michya*).

Fore-Blessing: Raw or Cooked Grains: Rolled Oats/Muesli

If rolled oats are eaten without cooking (such as in raw muesli), say *borei pri ha'adama* (after-blessing, *borei nefashot*).

Fore-Blessing: Raw or Cooked Grains: Granola

On granola, since it is cooked (baked), say *borei minei mezonot* (after-blessing, *al ha'michya).*

Fore-Blessing: Raw or Cooked Grains: Granola Bars

On granola bars, say *borei minei mezonot* (after-blessing, *al ha'michya).*

FORE-BLESSING: CAKE BATTER

Fore-Blessing: Raw Cake Batter

Before eating raw cake batter, say *she'hakol* (after-blessing: *borei nefashot*).

BOREI MINEI MEZONOT: INTENDED AS MEAL OR SNACK

Fore-Blessing: Bread-Like Crackers

Fore-blessing for Ryvita and other bread-like crackers :

- *Ha'motzi* if they are normally eaten as a meal —even if you eat only a small amount. The after-blessing is *birkat ha'mazon* as long as you ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) within four minutes.

  NOTE If you ate less than 1.3 fl. oz. or took more than 4 minutes, do not say any after-blessing.

- *Borei minei mezonot* if normally eaten as a snack (after-blessing: *al ha'michya*) .

SITUATION Crackers are normally eaten as a snack, but YOU eat it as part of a meal.
WHAT TO DO Say *ha'motzi* (after-blessing, *birkat ha'mazon).*

Fore-Blessing: Bread Sticks

Bread sticks are intended to be eaten as a snack, so say *borei minei mezonot* and not *ha'motzi* (after-blessing, *al ha'michya).*

Fore-Blessing: Crackers

Over crackers, say the fore-blessing *borei minei mezonot* (after-blessing, *al ha'michya).*

III. BOREI PRI HAGAFEN

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN: WHICH FOODS

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN: WHAT IT COVERS

When To Say Borei Pri HaGafen

Say *borei pri ha'gafen* on wine or grape juice, whether at a meal with bread or not.

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN: MIXED DRINKS

Borei Pri HaGafen: Mixed Drinks: Wine/Grape Juice Mixed with Water

Say *borei pri ha'gafen* on drinks of wine or grape juice mixed with water if at least 1/7th of the total volume is wine (or grape juice) but the mixture but also still be considered to be wine or grape juice.

Borei Pri HaGafen: Mixed Drinks: Wine/Grape Juice Mixed with Non-Water Liquids

Say *borei pri ha'gafen* on mixtures of wine (or grape juice) with beverages other than water, as long as the final mixture would still be considered to be wine (or grape juice) by most people in your area.

NOTE If the mixture is at least 50% wine (and maybe even at greater dilutions), it will normally be considered *borei pri ha'gafen*.

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN: IN SUCCESSION WITH SHEHAKOL

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN*: AFTER SHEHAKOL

Borei Pri HaGafen*: After SheHakol

SITUATION You said *she'hakol* on a non-grape beverage, drank the beverage, and then want to drink wine (or grape juice).

WHAT TO DO

Say *borei pri ha'gafen* before drinking the wine (or grape juice).

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN*: BEFORE SHEHAKOL

Borei Pri HaGafen*: Before SheHakol: Drink at Least 2 Fl. Oz.

If you say *borei pri ha'gafen* and drink at least 2 fl. oz. (59 ml) of wine (or grape juice) within 30 seconds, the *borei pri ha'gafen* will cover all subsequent beverages you drink at about the same time--even if their fore-blessing should be *she'hakol*.

NOTE Saying the after-blessing on the wine/grape juice--if drinking at least 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of the wine/grape juice--covers the water or other beverage that you drank.

Borei Pri HaGafen: Before SheHakol: Drink Less than 2 Fl. Oz.

If you say *borei pri ha'gafen* and drink less than 2 fl. oz. (59 ml) of wine (or grape juice) within 30 seconds, you must say *she'hakol* over any subsequent non-grape-based beverages that you drink.

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN: SAYING AGAIN

Saying Borei Pri HaGafen Again

You may say a new blessing on any remaining wine if:

- You said, or heard someone saying, *borei pri ha'gafen*,
- Drank some wine (or grape juice),
- Decided to stop drinking (*hesech da'at*), and
- Returned to drink from the same cup later.

NOTE If you are not sure you had *hesech da'at,* do not say a new blessing.

IV. BOREI PRI HA'EITZ

BOREI PRI HA'EITZ: WHICH FOODS

BOREI PRI HA’EITZ: ALL FRUITS

Borei Pri Ha'Eitz: All Fruits: Perennial Fruits and Nuts

Say *borei pri ha'eitz* on fruits and nuts from perennial trees or bushes.

NOTE A perennial tree or bush is a plant whose trunks or stalks survive from year to year; often with bark on the trunk or stalk.

BOREI PRI HA’EITZ: FIVE SPECIAL FRUITS

Borei Pri Ha'Eitz: Five Special Fruits: General Rule

Say *borei pri ha'eitz* on the *Five Special Fruits* for which the Land of Israel is praised.

Borei Pri Ha'Eitz: Five Special Fruits: Order and Preference

To eat more than one type of the *Five Special Fruits*:

- If you have a particular preference, you may eat the fruits in whichever order you prefer.
- If you have no particular preference, eat them in this order:
    - Olive
    - Date
    - Grape
    - Fig
    - Pomegranate.

NOTE Order of *Five Special Fruits*

The order for eating the *Five Special Fruits* comes from *Deuteronomy/Devarim* 8:8 and follows the fruit's proximity to the two times the word "*eretz*" is used:
"*Eretz chita u's'ora v'gefen u't'eina v'rimon, eretz zayit shemen u'dvash*."
A land of wheat and barley and grapevine and fig and pomegranate, a land of olive oil and honey.

V. BOREI PRI HAADAMA

BOREI PRI HAADAMA: WHICH FOODS

BOREI PRI HAADAMA: WHICH FOODS: GENERAL RULES

Borei Pri HaAdama: Which Foods: General Rules

Say *borei pri ha'adama* on:

- Common vegetables,
- Fruits and nuts that grow on annual plants (such as pineapple, bananas, strawberries, peanuts), and
- Uncooked or unbaked grains, including those not of the *Five Special Grains.*

NOTE For when to say *she'hakol*, see Borei Pri HaAdama: Sprouts .

BOREI PRI HAADAMA: WHICH FOODS: SPECIALTY FOODS

Borei Pri HaAdama: Bananas, Hearts of Palm

Say *borei pri ha'adama* if the tree from which the food grew can only be used once, such as banana trees or palm trees that get cut down after giving their produce.

Borei Pri HaAdama: Bread Croutons in Salad

For fore-blessing of bread croutons in salad, see Borei Pri HaAdama: Salads.

Borei Pri HaAdama: Salads

Say *borei pri ha'adama* on vegetable salad.

NOTE The fore-blessing of *borei pri ha'adama* also covers salad toppings and additions that by themselves require a different blessing, such as:

- *Borei pri ha'eitz* for a sprinkling of pine nuts, cashews, apple slices, or raisins, or
- *Borei minei mezonot* or *ha'motzi* for bread croutons.

REASON Since these toppings and additions are subordinate to the main salad, you do not say the individual blessings; you only say *borei pri ha'adama.*

Borei Pri HaAdama: Sprouts

Say the fore-blessing of *she'hakol* if the sprouts were grown only in water.
Say *borei pri ha'adama* if the grains were sprouted in the ground (such as sunflower sprouts or wheat grass).

VI. SHEHAKOL

SHEHAKOL: WHICH FOODS

SheHakol: Which Foods: General Rule

Say *she'hakol*, the most general blessing, over any food or drink that does not fall into a higher category (*HaMotzi*, *Borei Minei Mezonot*, *Borei Pri Ha'Eitz*, *Borei Pri HaGafen*, and *Borei Pri HaAdama)*.

NOTE One blessing of *she'hakol* covers both liquids and solids that will be eaten/drunk at the same snack or meal.

SheHakol: Which Foods: Mistaken SheHakol

She'hakol may theoretically apply to many foods, *b'diavad*,--even bread, wine, the Five Special Fruits, and *mezonot*. However, we have a principle to say the highest-level food blessing possible. If you said *she'hakol*, mistakenly believing it was the correct blessing for a higher-level food, *she'hakol* does cover the food after the fact and, *b'di'avad*, you may eat the bread, wine, or other higher-level food.

SheHakol: Which Foods: Unrecognizable Foods

You must be able to recognize, from at least one piece, that an ingredient is from the ground or from a tree in order to say *borei pri ha'adama* or *borei pri ha'eitz*. If not, say *she'hakol*.
So say *she'hakol* on:

- All foods that did not grow in the ground or on a tree, but also
- Foods that you cannot personally identify as having grown in the ground or on a tree—either because it has been finely ground or processed or because you personally do not know what it is.

EXAMPLE Even if you know that a *kugel* is made with potatoes, unless you can see recognizable pieces of potato, do not say *borei pri ha'adama*, but rather *she'hakol*.

EXAMPLES (Foods that Get *SheHakol*)

- Apple Sauce.
- Beer, Cognac, Grape Brandy, and other alcoholic beverages other than wine and grape juice and their derivatives.
- Cheese and other *Dairy* Products (unless they contain grain).
- Eggs (plain).
- Fish.
- Fruits or vegetables whose identity is not recognizable.
- Honey.
- Ice Cream.
- Juice.
- Meat.
- Mushrooms.
- Poultry.
- Seaweed.
- Soda.
- Soup (clear).
- Sprouts.
- Water.

SHEHAKOL: IF YOU CANNOT EAT THE FOOD

SheHakol: Said But Cannot Eat

SITUATION You said the blessing *she'hakol*, intending to eat some cheese that is in front of you, and then remember that you ate meat shortly before.

WHAT TO DO You should not eat any of the cheese but, instead, say *Baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed*.

SHEHAKOL: HOW OFTEN

SheHakol: Drinking Water Once

Say the *she'hakol* blessing on water once for the entire day if you:

- Are hiking or doing other outdoor activities, and
- Have water with you or know there is water along the way, and
- Expect to be thirsty again later in the day and will want to drink water.

SheHakol: Drinking Water Again

Say a new *she'hakol* blessing if you buy more water along the way while hiking or doing other outdoor activities--even if you said the blessing at the start of your day's activities.

SheHakol: Drinks while in Flight

If you intend to continue drinking during a flight**,** you may say one blessing on beverages (*she'hakol*) and continue drinking for the entire flight.

SHEHAKOL: WHEN NOT TO SAY

SheHakol: When Not To Say: Non-Nutritive Foods

Do not say a fore-blessing on chewing gum or bubble gum if it contains no nutritional substances.

SHEHAKOL: HUMOROUS REMINDER POEM

SheHakol: Humorous Reminder Poem

If you're in doubt,
And you do not know,
Say *she'hakol*
Nihiyeh bi'dvaro.

FOOD FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): SPECIAL CASES

FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): FOOD MIXTURES

GENERAL RULES OF FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): FOOD MIXTURES

Fore-Blessings (Bracha Rishona): Food Mixtures: Main Ingredient

1. Say the fore-blessing (*bracha rishona*) over the main or most important ingredient in a mixture of foods from various food-blessing categories.
2. The blessing on the main food covers all other ingredients in the mixture.

EXAMPLES Fore-Blessing over Turkey with Cranberry Sauce
To eat turkey with cranberry sauce, saying the fore-blessing *she'hakol* on the more-important food (turkey) covers the less-important food (cranberry sauce). Even if you eat some of the sauce after the turkey is finished, you do not say a new blessing on the sauce.

NOTE If you eat cranberry sauce by itself and not with turkey, say:

- *Borei pri ha'eitz* if it contains identifiable pieces of (or entire) cranberries.
- *She'hakol* if the cranberry sauce has no identifiable pieces.

Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona) over Cholent

Cholent blessing (if the *cholent* is not eaten as part of a meal) follows the most important ingredient and is somewhat subjective to the eater.

- German *cholent* —A variety of wheat is primary; say *borei minei mezonot*.
- Hungarian *cholent*—Barley is primary; say *borei minei mezonot*.
- Polish *cholent* —Beans are primary; say *borei pri ha'adama*.

- Russian *cholent* —Potatoes are primary; say *borei pri ha'adama*.
- If meat is most important, say *she'hakol*.

NOTE You may need to say more than one blessing (*bracha rishona*) if there is no one preeminently important ingredient in a mixture of food types in one utensil, such as a casserole or *cholent*, but only if:

- You especially like more than one ingredient, and
- Both (or more than two) of the ingredients can be eaten distinctly.

FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): FOOD MIXTURES: INCLUDING FIVE GRAINS

FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): MIXTURES WITH FIVE GRAINS: CONTAINING BREAD/MEZONOT

Introduction to Food Fore-Blessings (Bracha Rishona): The Five Grains

Bread or *Mezonot*: Intended Use

Whether a food made of the *Five Grains* qualifies as bread (*ha'motzi*) or *mezonot* (*borei minei mezonot*) depends on whether the food was intended to be eaten as a meal or as a snack, as follows:

- Bread for a meal: Say *ha'motzi*.
- *Mezonot* (but you will eat a full meal): Say *ha'motzi*.
- A snack (including bread as a snack): Say *borei minei mezonot*.

NOTE Some foods may qualify as either *ha'motzi* or *mezonot* (such as pizza).

NOTE Whether the bread/*mezonot* was made with fruit juice instead of water may not affect its blessing, since the blessing is determined by the food's intended use. "*Mezonot*" rolls on airline flights may still require the blessing of *ha'motzi* if you eat them as part of a meal.

NOTE Bread that has been cut into small pieces and fried may be reduced in status from bread to *mezonot*.

Bread/*Mezonot*: Amount of Five Grains Needed

In a non-bread food containing a mixture of grains, at least 20% of the main ingredients must be from one of the *Five Grains* in order to require the fore-blessing (*bracha rishona*) of *borei minei mezonot* (after-blessing: *al ha'michya*).
If at least 20% of a bread's flour is from one of the *Five Grains*, say a fore-blessing of *ha'motzi* (and *birkat ha'mazon* afterward if you ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. within four minutes).

NOTE If you do not know the actual percent of each grain, such as in cereal, say *she'hakol* (after-blessing: *borei nefashot*). But you should try to determine the actual amounts of the grains.

Bread/*Mezonot*: Mixtures with Other Foods

Normally, the fore-blessing for bread (*ha'motzi*), or for other cooked or baked foods made from flour (borei minei *mezonot*), will override the remaining foods in a food mixture.

NOTE Bread that has been cut into small pieces and fried may be reduced in status from bread to *mezonot*.

EXAMPLES Saying HaMotzi over Bread Mixture
Wash and say *ha'motzi* over bread and bread-mixture foods such as French toast, if at least one piece is more than 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) in volume.
If no individual piece is at least 1.3 fl. oz., say *borei minei mezonot*.

REASON Being fried changes the French toast's status, even if the total of all of the pieces is more than

1.3 fl. oz.

Saying Borei Minei *Mezonot* over *Mezonot* Mixture

Say borei minei *mezonot* over:

- *Cholent* whose main ingredient is barley;
- Ice cream cone (ice cream + cone)—see “ice cream cone” for further details;
- Pie; and
- Cheesecake with any kind of crust.

NOTE Cheesecakes are sold in bakeries and not in cheese stores, indicating that the *mezonot* part is more important than the cheese part as regards fore- and after-blessings.

FORE-BLESSINGS: FRUIT MIXTURES

Fore-Blessings over Fruit Cocktail

For fruit cocktail, say fore-blessings of *borei pri ha'eitz* (for tree fruits) AND *borei pri ha'adama* (for pineapple, etc.).

REASON Fruit cocktail does not have a main ingredient.

FORE-BLESSINGS: MIXTURES WITH RICE

Fore-Blessings: Stuffed Grape Leaves

If grape leaves are stuffed with rice, say *borei minei mezonot*.

Fore-Blessings: Sushi

Say the fore-blessing *borei minei mezonot* over sushi, since the rice is primary. If you are eating the sushi for the salmon (or other ingredient) in the middle, say *she'hakol*, too (or whatever blessing is correct for that important ingredient).

NOTE To say fore-blessings over sushi:

- Say *borei minei mezonot*, then take a bite of rice (which may have nori, etc., on it).
- Say *she'hakol*, then take a bite of fish (which may have rice, avocado, etc., stuck to it).

FORE-BLESSINGS: UNUSUAL FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Bracha Rishona: Coconut Water

To drink coconut water:

- Say *borei pri ha'eitz* if you drink coconut water directly from the coconut.
- Say *she'hakol* if you pour the water out of the nut into a utensil.

Bracha Rishona: Fiddleheads

Say *borei pri ha'adama* on fiddleheads (unfurled fern tops in early spring).

Bracha Rishona: Hydroponic Vegetables

Say *she'hakol* on hydroponic vegetables, including bean sprouts.

NOTE If you don't know how the vegetables were grown, you are not required to research the source of the vegetables: you may assume that they are not hydroponic and say the fore-blessing of *borei pri ha'adama*.

Bracha Rishon: Olives

There is no separate blessing on eating olives with a meal. If you eat olives by themselves (without other food), say *borei pri ha'eitz*.

Bracha Rishona: Popcorn

Say *borei pri ha'adama* on popcorn.

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 *mezonot*.

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 *mezonot*, 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 *mezonot*). 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 *mezonot*, 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 *mezonot* 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 *mezonot* (and even if you will not eat any more *mezonot* with your meal), do not say *al ha'michya*. Just wash your hands, say *ha'motz*i, 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 *mezonot*-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 (*mezonot)* 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 *mezonot* if you are not certain whether you said it or not.

Al HaMichya: Doubt If 72 Minutes Have Passed

SITUATION You ate some *mezonot*. 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 *mezonot* 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*.

SHEHECHEYANU

INTRODUCTION TO SHEHECHEYANU

Introduction to SheHecheyanu: When Obligatory

Say *she'hecheyanu* for:

- Acquisitions,
- *Jewish festivals*, and

- New fruits.

NOTE You MUST say *she'hecheyanu* on *Jewish festivals;* saying *she'hecheyanu* on acquisitions is subjective and is only required if you enjoy the possession and it is new (for you) and valuable.

HaTov V'HaMeitiv or SheHecheyanu

Say *ha'tov v'ha'meitiv* instead of *she'hecheyanu* when two or more people benefit from or enjoy something.

EXAMPLES

- If your wife or husband will enjoy and use the new item too.
- When wine is already on the table and a second bottle of wine that is as good as, or better than, the first bottle is brought to the table (and more than one person will drink that second bottle of wine).

NOTE When two or more people are eating a new fruit that is in season, each person says the blessings *al pri ha'eitz* and then *she'hechaynu* (and not *ha'tov v'hameitiv*).

SHEHECHEYANU: ACQUISITIONS

SHEHECHEYANU: ACQUISITIONS: WHICH ITEMS

On What To Say SheHecheyanu

Say *she'hecheyanu* on any item that you acquire through any of the following means, as long as the item gives you pleasure:

- Gifts.
- Purchases you made.
- Used items that you acquire.

NOTE If the item would be desirable or a luxury to other people, but it is not to you, or if it only has value to you as a useful item, do not say *she'hecheyanu*.

NOTE From Richard Aiken --I said s*he'hecheyanu* on my scuba diving equipment and on my paragliders, the first time I used them.)

Items on Which Women Say SheHecheyanu

Women say *she'hecheyanu* on:

- Engagement rings but not on wedding rings.
- Valuable candlesticks.

Items on Which Men Say SheHecheyanu

Men say s*he'hecheyanu* on a new *talit*. Do not say s*he'hecheyanu* on *tefilin*.

SheHecheyanu and Attire

The only items of attire that get a *she'hecheyanu* blessing are those that are worn for enjoyment or importance. These are both subjective: If you don't enjoy new clothes, don't say *she'hecheyanu* over them.

NOTE *She'hecheyanu* is not said on shoes.

SheHecheyanu: House or Apartment

Say *she'hecheyanu* on a house, condominium, apartment, or other accommodation that you buy. Don't say *she'hecheyanu* on a house or apartment that you are renting.

NOTE If you are married (or living there with any other family members), say *ha'tov v'ha'meitiv* instead of *she'hecheyanu*.

SHEHECHEYANU: ACQUISITIONS: WHEN TO BLESS

SheHecheyanu: Acquisitions: When You May Say

You may say *she'hecheyanu* as long as you still feel the exhilaration of having or using the new item (ideally, say the blessing when you purchase the item or receive it as a gift.).

SheHecheyanu: Acquisitions: When To Bless over New Home

If you buy a house, condominium, apartment, or other accommodation, say *she'hecheyanu*:

- When you buy it, if it is ready to move in when you buy it (if you will live there by yourself).
- When you move in, if it is not ready to move in when you buy it (if you will live there by yourself).

NOTE If you are married, say *ha'tov v'ha'meitiv* instead of *she'hecheyanu*.

SHEHECHEYANU: JEWISH FESTIVALS

SheHecheyanu at Candle-Lighting for Jewish Festivals

Say *she'hecheyanu* when lighting candles for:

- Both days of *Rosh Hashana*,
- *Yom Kippur*,
- First day (if in *Eretz Yisrael*) or first two days of *Sukkot*,
- *Shmini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah*,
- First day (if in *Eretz Yisrael*) or both days of *Shavuot*, and
- First day (if in *Eretz Yisrael*) or first two days of *Passover*.

NOTE *She'hecheyanu* is not said on the last day (if in *Eretz Yisrael*) or last two days of *Passover*.

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS: ORDER OF BLESSINGS

Borei Pri Ha'Eitz or SheHecheyanu First

Steps for saying *she'hecheyanu* on a new fruit:

- Say *borei pri ha'eitz* first, then
- Say *she'hecheyanu*, then
- (Cut and) Eat it.

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS: WHEN TO BLESS

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS: WHEN FIRST IN SEASON

SheHecheyanu: New Fruits: When Is First in Season

Say *she'hecheyanu* when eating a fresh (not dried or frozen) fruit for the first time it appears in the market that season (this does not follow *Rosh Hashana* or any of the other Jewish "years").

NOTE If a fruit is available year round, never say *she'hecheyanu* over it.

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS: WHEN TRAVELLING

SheHecheyanu: New Fruits: Visiting Place Where Fruit Is Available Year Round

SITUATION

- You live in an area in which a fresh fruit is not available all year.

- You visit a place in which that fruit IS available all year.

WHAT TO DO You do not say *she'hecheyanu* when eating this fruit the new place.

SheHecheyanu: New Fruits: Visiting Place Where Fruit Is Not Available Year Round

SITUATION

- You visit a country in which a fresh fruit is not available there year round.
- You have not eaten this fruit that year (either since the fruit season began there or within the past 12 months).

WHAT TO DO You may say *she'hecheyanu*.

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS: IMPORT/EXPORT

SheHecheyanu: New Fruits: Import/Export

SITUATION

A fruit is available year-round in one place.
That fruit is taken to a place where it is not available.

WHAT TO DO

You may say *she'hecheyanu* on the fruit in that second place.

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS: WHICH TYPES

Varieties of Fruit for SheHecheyanu

If one type of fruit has many varieties--such as navel oranges, Valencia oranges, kumquats, grapefruit, and other citrus fruits-- say *she'hecheyanu* on each type if the:

- Trees have different leaves, OR
- Taste differs from one another (taste must be noticeable to an average person).

NOTE Since many fruits are often available year round, it may not be possible to ever say *she'hecheyanu* on those fruits.

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS: ON WHICH FORMS TO BLESS

SheHecheyanu: Cooked Fruit

Say *she'hecheyanu* on cooked fruit in season if that fruit is not normally available all year. If the fruit is commonly available canned, you may not say *she'hecheyanu* on it at any time.

SheHecheyanu: Dried Fruit

Do not say *she'hecheyanu* on dried fruit.

NOTE *She'hecheyanu* may be said on carob while it is still chewy.

SheHecheyanu: Imported Fruit

Do not say *she'hecheyanu* again if:

- You already said *she'hecheyanu* on that type of fruit once during that year,
- The fruit then stops being available, but
- Later in the year it becomes available again as an import from another country.

SheHecheyanu: New Fruit with Juice

SITUATION

- You drink the juice of a fruit that you have not eaten for one year.
- Later, you will eat the actual fruit,

WHAT TO DO Say *she'hecheyanu* on the fruit (if you would normally be required to do so).

NOTE Having drunk the juice does not affect the status of the fruit's being new and in season.

NOTE You do not ever say *she'hecheyanu* on fruit juice!

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS: TWO OR MORE

SheHecheyanu for Two or More Fruits

If you eat two new fruits at same sitting, say *she'hecheyanu* only once.

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS: MIGHT NOT LIKE

SheHecheyanu for New Fruit You Might Not Like

SITUATION

You have a fruit on which you would like to say *she'hecheyanu*, but you might not like it.

WHAT TO DO

To avoid saying a pointless blessing (*bracha l'vatala*), you may:

- Say the blessing *borei pri ha'eitz* on a different fruit.
- Eat from the fruit you just blessed over.
- Taste the new fruit. If you like it—and before you have eaten all of the new fruit—
- Swallow the small piece you tasted (if you do not like it, you do not need to swallow it).
- Say *she'hecheyanu*.
- Finish eating the new fruit.

NOTE When saying she'hecheyanu on a new fruit, there is no preference for on which fruit to say borei pri ha'eitz--you may say it on the new fruit or on any other fruit.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

TEFILAT HADERECH

TEFILAT HADERECH: WHEN TO SAY

Tefilat HaDerech: When To Say: Leaving Your

Say *tefilat ha'derech* when leaving your "place," which may be a city, town, village, or even your home if you live in an isolated area. You may only say *tefilat ha'derech* if you will go at least 2.8 miles outside the inhabited area.

Tefilat HaDerech: When To Say: Starting Journey

If you will certainly leave the city limits at some point in your journey, you may say *tefilat ha'derech* as soon as you start your journey (when you leave your house or get in your car, etc.).

EXAMPLE You may say *tefilat ha'derech* when leaving your house for a flight, but the optimal time is when the plane begins to taxi.

Tefilat HaDerech: When To Say: City Limits

City limits for *tefilat ha'derech* means the last house before a gap of 2.8 miles, measured horizontally but not vertically.

Tefilat HaDerech: Boat

Say *tefilat ha'derech* in a boat that will be going at least 2.8 miles from shore.

TEFILAT HADERECH: HOW OFTEN

TEFILAT HADERECH: HOW OFTEN: ONCE A DAY/ONCE A TRIP

Tefilat HaDerech: How Often: Once a Day/Once a Trip: Vehicles

When riding in a vehicle on a trip, you should say *tefilat ha'derech* once each day, as long as:

- You have gone--or will go--at least 2.8 miles past any populated area, and
- You will be breaking your trip at night.

NOTE If you will be living in an RV or other vehicle, only say *tefilat ha'derech* once for the entire trip.

Tefilat HaDerech: How Often: Once a Day/Once a Trip: Boats

If you take a multi-day boat trip, such as a cruise, say *tefilat ha'derech* only once during the journey—not each day.

NOTE Any time you stay overnight (on land) along the journey, say *tefilat ha'derech* again when you resume your travel.

TEFILAT HADERECH: WHAT TO SAY

Tefilat HaDerech: What To Say: Main Blessing

You do not need to say other blessings before *tefilat ha'derech*. Since *tefilat ha'derech* begins without a blessing, some people like to say an unrelated blessing before it, but the custom is not to require saying another blessing first.

Tefilat HaDerech: What To Say: For Others

When saying *tefilat ha'derech*, even if you say it for other people traveling with you, always say "*titneini*" (in the singular) and not "*titneinu*" (plural).

NOTE This is different from most blessings, which are in the plural even when said by just one person for him/herself.

Tefilat HaDerech: What To Say: Phrases (Psukim)

After saying the main blessing of *tefilat ha'derech*, some people have the custom to say these phrases (*psukim)* three times each:

- *L'shuatcha kiviti...*
- *V'ya'akov halach l'darko...*
- *Yivarechecha...*
- *Hinei anochi sholei'ach lifanecha...*

AL NETILAT YADAYIM OR AL TEVILAT YADAYIM

Al Netilat Yadayim or Al Tevilat Yadayim: Water Fit or Not Fit

Say *al netilat yadayim* even if you wash your hands by immersing them in a river, ocean, or other natural body of water.

NOTE Say *al tevilat yadayim* if the water is not fit for *netilat yadayim* (if it smells bad, is salty, a dog would not drink it, etc.). This applies to washing before bread, after sleeping, etc.

BLESSINGS: SCENTS

Blessings: Scents: When To Say

Say the blessing if you intend to smell something fragrant; you may, but do not need to, say a blessing if you smell a scent in passing. If you are outdoors and a pleasant scent of flowers comes to you, even if you did not intend to smell the flowers, as long as you enjoy the scent, you may still say the appropriate blessing.

Blessings: Scents: The Four Blessings

Choose the correct smell blessing (Note that these blessings are not said on synthetic scents!):

- *Borei minei vesamim* Generic; this is the default blessing if you are not certain which category applies; also say this when smelling a mixture of scents;
- *Borei isvei vesamim* Plants which do not have stiff stems;
- *Borei atzei vesamim* Trees and stiff-stemmed plants (such as roses); and
- *Ha'notein rei'ach tov ba'peirot* Fragrant fruits, such as lemons and some *etrogs.*

Blessings: Scents: Minimum Scent

The minimum intensity of scent required to be permitted to say a scent blessing is anything you can smell and that you find pleasant.

Blessings: Scents: Sniffing First

SITUATION You see a flower but do not know whether it has a scent.

WHAT TO DO You may sniff the flower and, if it does have a nice scent, you may then say *borei minei* (or *atzei* or *isvei* as appropriate) *vesamim* and then take a big whiff.

Blessings: Scents: All Scents in that Category

SITUATION You are visiting a botanical garden or an outdoor area at which you will see many flowers and blossoms.

WHAT TO DO You may say the appropriate blessings on pleasant smells once for each category and intend for the blessing to apply to all flowers and blossoms you will smell during that day.

Blessings: Scents: Hesech Da'at

If you say *borei isvei vesamim* or *borei atzei vesamim*, you should say the blessing again once you have had a lapse of thought (*hesech da'at*); that is, once you have stopped thinking about smelling fragrances at that time.

HAGOMEL

HAGOMEL: FOR WHICH EVENTS

After What To Say HaGomel

Say *ha'gomel* after:

- Crossing the ocean (far enough away that you cannot see the shore);
- Crossing a desert by any means except flying;
- Getting out of jail; or
- Recovering from a serious illness.

In addition, say *ha'gomel* anytime a catastrophe has been avoided, such as a vehicle crash. Consult a competent *halachic* authority in these cases.

HAGOMEL: WHEN TO SAY

Saying HaGomel within 30 Days

Say *ha'gomel* within three days of the event; *b'di'avad,* it is OK to say it within 30 days.

Say HaGomel When You Can Walk Normally

You may say *ha'gomel* after recovering from a serious illness once you are able to walk around normally.

HAGOMEL: FOR WHOM TO SAY

For Whom To Say HaGomel

Don't say *ha'gomel* for anyone other than yourself (not even for your spouse or children). Likewise, one person may not exempt the entire congregation for *ha'gomel* except *b'di'avad*. But when an entire *congregation* says *ha'gomel*, use "*gemalanu*."

HAGOMEL: WOMEN

Women and HaGomel

Women customarily do not say *ha'gomel*. A woman does not say *ha'gomel* after childbirth.

BLESSINGS: NATURAL PHENOMENA

BLESSINGS: COMETS

Blessings: Comets: How Often

Say *oseh ma'aseh v'reishit* only once per comet.

BLESSINGS: EARTHQUAKES

Blessings: Earthquakes: Cycle of Earthquakes

Say *she'kocho u'gvurato malei olam* or *oseh ma'aseh v'reishit* (either is correct) once per earthquake. Don't say the blessing on aftershocks.

NOTE One cycle of quakes and aftershocks is still considered just one earthquake, even if it lasts more than one day.

BLESSING: ECLIPSES

Blessings: Eclipses: Solar and Lunar Eclipses

There is no blessing for eclipses.

BLESSINGS: METEORS

Blessings: Meteors: How Often

Say *oseh ma'aseh v'reishit* once per night**.**

BLESSINGS: MOUNTAINS

Blessings: Mountains Renown for Their Height

Say *oseh ma'aseh v'reishit* once per month on mountains, but only on very large mountains that are famous for their height and that you have not seen within 30 days.

BLESSINGS: OCEANS

Blessings:

Say *she'asa et ha'yam ha'gadol* when you can see an ocean or the Mediterranean sea, but only:

- While you are present, and
- After not having seen it for at least 30 days.

NOTE If you forgot to say it and returned the next day, you may not say the blessing.

BLESSINGS: RAINBOWS

Blessings: Rainbows: Looking and Blessing

The blessing over rainbows is *zocheir ha'brit v'ne'eman bi'vrito, v'kayam b'ma'amaro*.

NOTE You may not gaze at a rainbow, but you may look at it for up to 2.5 seconds, then look away, and then look back repeatedly an unlimited number of times.

NOTE Don't tell other people that a rainbow is visible. But if they see you looking or hear you saying the blessing, you may tell them that there is a rainbow and you may tell them the correct blessing to say.

BLESSINGS: STORMS

Blessings: Thunder

Say the blessing *she'kocho u'gvurato malei olam* if you hear thunder**.** (See Blessings: Thunder/Lightning: Which First)

Blessings: Lightning

Start saying the blessing *oseh ma'aseh v'reishit* within 2 ½ seconds of seeing a lightning flash; otherwise, do not say the blessing at all.

NOTE You do not need to see the actual lightning bolt--you must just see the light from lightning, even if reflected from something.

NOTE The lightning must be from a rainstorm, but you may say the blessing on lightning even if it is not raining where you are, as long as you can hear thunder first. (See Blessings: Thunder/Lightning: Which First and Blessings: Thunder/Lightning: How Often)

Blessings: Thunder/Lightning: Which First

Always say *she'kocho u'gvurato malei olam* (on thunder) before *oseh ma'aseh v'reishit (*on lightning.)
If you see lighting but don't hear thunder, do not say *oseh ma'aseh v'reishit* at all.

Blessings: Thunder/Lightning: How Often

Say *she'kocho u'gvurato malei olam* (on thunder) and *oseh ma'aseh v'reishit* (on lightning) only once per storm. If you hear thunder over telephone or microphone, you may not say kocho u'gvurato.

NOTE If the storm clouds clear and another storm comes along, you may say blessings again, even on the same day.

KIDDUSH LEVANA

INTRODUCTION TO KIDDUSH LEVANA

Introduction to Kiddush Levana: Thanksgiving

Kiddush levana expresses our thanks to God for having made the moon, which affects our lives (tides, weather, crops, biological clocks) and provides us benefits in many ways (light at night, basis for determining our calendar and our holidays).

KIDDUSH LEVANA: WHAT TO SEE

Kiddush Levana: What To See: How Clear the Moon

You do not need to see the moon completely clearly in order to say *kiddush levana*, but you must be able to see the outline of the moon.

KIDDUSH LEVANA: WHEN TO SAY

Kiddush Levana: When To Say: Molad

Although the traditional time to say *kiddush levana* is after *Shabbat*, you may say *kiddush levana* from the third day (three periods of 24 hours) after the *molad* until 14 days and 18 hours after the *molad*. Ideal is after seven 24-hour periods.

Kiddush Levana: When To Say: Custom not To Say

It is customary not to say *kiddush levana:*

- During the *Nine Days* before and including *Tish'a b'Av*;
- On Friday night, and
- On the evening of a *Jewish festival.*

Many people also have the custom not to say *kiddush levana* during the first 10 days of *Tishrei*. However, you should do so if you do not expect to see the moon on any other night (due to weather or other factors), rather than miss the chance to say it that month. If you do say *kiddush levana* on Friday night or the after nightfall of a *Jewish festival*, say only the blessing, not the *Psalms* and other phrases that are normally said.

Kiddush Levana: When To Say: Night

You may say *kiddush levana* (blessing on the new moon) only at night, after dark/*tzeit ha'kochavim*.

Kiddush Levana: When To Say: When No Dark

At the high latitudes, you may say *kiddush levana* during any season when the sky gets dark but not during seasons when the sky does not get dark.

Kiddush Levana: When To Say: Shabbat

You may say *kiddush levana* on *Shabbat*, if needed.

EXAMPLES

- *Shabbat* is the last possible night that month to say *kiddush levana.*
- The forecast is for clouds for the other nights until it will be too late that month to say *kiddush levana.*

NOTE On *Shabbat*, say only the blessing of *kiddush levana*, not the *psalms* or other phrases (*psukim*).

KIDDUSH LEVANA: WHO SAYS

Kiddush Levana: Minyan

You do not need a *minyan* to say *kiddush levana*.

Kiddush Levana: Women

Women do not say *kiddush levana*.

KIDDUSH LEVANA: WHAT TO SAY

Kiddush Levana: Minimum Blessing

The minimum you may say of *kiddush levana* and fulfill the *mitzva* is the blessing. The *psalms* and other *psukim* are customary but are not required.

ASHER YATZAR

Asher Yatzar: Minimum

The minimum amount to urinate or defecate and be able to say *asher yatzar* is any quantity (*kolshehu*).

Asher Yatzar: Timing

If you did not say *asher yatzar* immediately after finishing, you may still say the blessing until the next time you feel the need to urinate or defecate.

Asher Yatzar with No Water

Say *asher yatzar*, even when you cannot wash your hands, such as when you do not have any water with you.

NOTE In any case, your hands must be clean; if they are not, you must wipe them off on something before saying the blessing.

Asher Yatzar: Saying for Someone Else

You may say *asher yatzar* for someone else if you need to say it also.

Asher Yatzar or After-Blessing

If you are eating and stopped to use the toilet, you may say either *asher yatzar* or the after-blessing on the food first.

Asher Yatzar Underwater

After urinating while scuba diving, say asher yatzar. The water is sufficient as a head covering or, better, you may cover your head with your wetsuit sleeve.

BLESSING THE CHILDREN/BIRKAT HABANIM

Introduction to Blessing the Children/Birkat HaBanim

The Blessing for the Children has two parts:

1. Introduction
   For Boys: "*Yesimcha Elohim k'Efraim v'chi'Menashe*"
   (May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe)

   For Girls: "*Yesimeich Elohim k'Sara, Rivka, Rachel, v'Leah*"
   (May God make you like Sara, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah)

   NOTE The formula asks God to make the boys like Ephraim and Menashe but to make the girls like Sarah, Rivka/Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. We might think that Sara, Rivka/Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah should be paired with their husbands, *Abraham*, Isaac, and Jacob instead of with their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Yet, while Isaac and Jacob had the advantage of growing up in religious homes and in *Eretz Yisrael*, all of the fore-mothers as well as Ephraim and Menashe lived righteous lives even though all grew up in bad environments outside of *Eretz Yisrael*.

2. Priestly Blessing/*Birkat Cohanim* (Numbers/*Bamidbar* 6:24-26)
   This is the blessing that the priests (*cohanim*) use when blessing the Jewish people. For words to the blessing, please click here and scroll down to "*Birkat Cohanim*": http://practicalhalacha.com/blessings#B
   .

Blessing the Children: When To Bless

Bless children on:

- Friday night,
- Saturday night (this is so we start the new week with a blessing), and
- *Jewish festival* nights.

NOTE This is a non-binding custom, not a *halacha*.

Blessing the Children: Who Should Bless

Who should bless the children:

- Anyone may bless children, but it is best for both parents to do so.
- Parents may ask any other adult to be their emissary to bless their children.

Blessing the Children: How To Bless: How To Place Hands

You may use one or two hands when giving a blessing, such as when blessing children on *Shabbat* or *Jewish festivals*. You may hold your hands over the person's head or actually put your hands on their head--either is OK.

Blessing the Children: How To Bless: From Afar

Parents may bless their children by telephone if not nearby. This is a non-binding custom, not a *halacha*.

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