

Review Sheet #19:

Terminating a Bracha's Effectiveness:

1. As you "decide you are finished" eating (or drinking), your bracha loses its effect. A bracha only lasts as long as you intend to **continue** eating. Once you are "finished" eating or drinking, you may not eat or drink any more without saying a new bracha. The decision to stop eating is called *hesech hada'at* (lit. "removing your thoughts").
2. Although making a **conscious decision** to stop eating is *hesech hada'at*, that is not the only way to do so. There are certain actions and interruptions that generate an automatic *hesech hada'at*, terminating the effectiveness of your bracha.
3. The most obvious form of terminating the effectiveness of a bracha is by reciting a *bracha achrona* (lit: after-bracha). Once this bracha is recited, you have made a clear statement that your eating session has ended; if you want to continue eating or drinking, a new bracha is required.
4. *Hesech hada'at* occurs as soon as you perform a step that precedes a *bracha achrona*. For example, once you wash *Mayim Achronim*, the ritual hand-washing that immediately precedes Birkat Hamazon (Grace After Meals), this indicates that you have decided to end the meal.
5. If you announce, "Let's recite Birkat Hamazon," effectively signaling your intent to end the meal; or you say, "I'm full, or "Because I'm on a diet, that's all I can eat," it is best to complete the after-bracha, and then say a new *bracha rishona* if you wish to eat more.
6. Some authorities are of the opinion that even a **mental decision** is considered a *hesech hada'at*. Although this opinion is not unanimous, in practice, once you have decided not to continue eating, it is best not to eat any more until after saying a *bracha achrona* (and then, of course, a new *bracha rishona*).
7. If you **doze off** to sleep while eating, it is not considered *hesech hada'at*, and you may continue eating without a bracha.
8. If, however, you consciously decide to take a **nap**, it is considered *hesech hada'at* and a new bracha is required before eating again.
9. The halacha defines "dozing off" as done in a sitting position, while "napping" is done in a lying position.
10. When a guest thinks he is finished eating, or announces, "Let's say a *bracha achrona*," it is not considered a *hesech hada'at*, since he would continue eating if the host offered him more food.
11. If a wife offers more food to her husband and he feels uncomfortable refusing, then he could continue eating, even though he had already decided to stop.
12. If you are a guest and the host announces, "Let's bentch," then you are required to stop eating -- no matter how much you're hoping for the last bite of chocolate cake.
13. If you had specific intention to continue eating, you may continue as long as you avoid any misunderstanding and announce to the others presents that you have no *hesech hada'at* and want to continue eating.

