

### Class 10 – Three Mezonos Categories:

As we mentioned earlier, since grains that are processed and cooked (or baked) become a satiating dish, they receive the bracha Mezonot. When these same grains are ground into flour, **made into a dough** or batter, and then baked, they attain an even higher status of food: bread or cake.

In terms of brachot, baked goods are divided into three categories. It will be helpful for us to learn a few Hebrew terms:

**Category 1 - Bread** is defined as a baked dough, consisting primarily of flour and water. It has a loaf-like and dry texture.

**Category 2 - *Pas Haba B'Kisnin*** (the first word is often pronounced Pas) is a baked dough that does not quite resemble bread, and is generally eaten as a snack. Examples are cake and crackers.

**Category 3 - *Ma'aseh Kedaira*** is made from grains that were cooked and have a moist texture, like spaghetti and oatmeal.

We will now explain each of these categories in detail, and learn the correct bracha to say.

#### **Category 1 - Bread**

In the last class we learned that the bracha Mezonot was prescribed for foods that are filling and nutritious. Due to the significant level of sustenance that they provide, these foods are considered more important than other foods like fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, drinks and sweets (but try telling that to your kids!).

There is one food -- bread -- that is considered even more important than Mezonot, because it is the staple of every meal and the most essential of all foods. The Sages therefore formulated a special bracha for bread: *Hamotzee lechem min ha'aretz* -- "Who brings forth bread from the ground."

So whether it's a bagel, pita, rye bread or hot dog bun, the bracha is Hamotzee.

Before we move on to discuss the other two categories of baked good, let's learn a special halacha that pertains to bread. In addition to the

unique bracha formulated for bread (Hamotzee), the Sages also required washing one's hands before eating bread. This hand-washing is known as **Netilat Yadayim**, and is required whenever Hamotzee is recited.

Here's the easy 10-step guide:

1. Remove any rings from your fingers.
2. Fill a vessel with at least 5 ounces of water.
3. Raise the cup with your right hand, then pass it to your left hand.
4. Pour water twice over the right hand, getting every area of the hand wet on both sides from the wrist down.
5. Pass the cup to your right hand, and pour water twice over your left hand.
6. Hold your hands upward, so the water drips toward the wrist and not the fingers.
7. Recite the blessing, "Al Netilat Yadayim."
8. Dry your hands on a towel.
9. Without making any interruption, hold the bread with all 10 fingers, raise it slightly, and recite the blessing Hamotzee.
10. Dip the bread in salt, and eat!

### Washing Hands Before Bread

*Pour water over both hands and say:*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה	Bâruch Atâ Adonoy,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,	Eloheinu Melech hâ'olâm,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו	asher kidishânu bi'mitzvo'tâv,
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.	vi'tzivânu al netilat yâdâyim.

Blessed are You, God, our Lord, King of the universe,  
Who has sanctified us with His commandments,  
and commanded us regarding washing the hands.

*The hands are dried.*

*Be careful not to speak until the bread is eaten.*

## Category 2 - *Pat Haba B'Kisnin*

The second category of grain foods is called *Pat Haba B'Kisni*.

These foods differ from "bread" in that:

- you would typically not use it to make a sandwich
- you would typically not eat it with meat or fish
- it is usually eaten as a snack or dessert, not eaten as a full meal

Now let's get more technical. There are three specific characteristics which define a grain food as *Pat Haba B'Kisni*, and not as "bread":

**Type A - Sweet Dough:** The main ingredients in bread are flour and water. When other ingredients are added (e.g. eggs, sugar, honey, cocoa, fruit juice), the result is a sweeter tasting pastry -- what we typically call "cake."

When does "bread" become "cake"? If the volume of ingredients added to the dough is **more** than the volume of water, **and** the resulting pastry has a sweet taste like cake, then it is considered cake and not bread.

Walk into any bakery and you'll see lots of examples of this: cupcakes, coffee cake, honey cake and croissants.

What would be the bracha on raisin bread? Let's consider whether it fits the definition we mentioned above -- would you use it to make a sandwich, eat it with meat or fish, or eat it as a full meal? Well, that depends. If there are only a **few** raisins in the bread, then the bracha would be Hamotzee. But if there are **lots** of raisins packed into the bread, the bracha is Mezonot.

**Type B - Filled Dough:** Bread is usually not filled with any added ingredients. So a pastry or a pie that is baked with a filling is not considered bread, and their bracha is Mezonot. The filling must be significant enough to change the taste of the pastry.

This includes things like blintzes, cheese Danish, a hot dog wrapped in filo dough, borekas, apple pie, or any dough filled with chocolate, nuts, cherry filling, potato, meat, etc.

Here's another case to consider: What if you had a nice piece of apple pie, and decided to eat **only** the crust? Although this crust is no longer

"filled," but since it was originally baked *with* the filling, the bracha is still Mezonot.

**Type C - Thin and Crispy:** Bread is usually soft and has mass. Thin, brittle baked goods, on the other hand, are generally eaten as a snack. Therefore, foods like crackers, pretzels and breadsticks, are not considered bread, and the bracha is Mezonot.

To summarize the rule: Baked goods that are **any one** of these three types -- tasty dough, filled, or thin and crispy -- are **not** considered bread. Rather, they are *Pat Haba B'Kisnin*, whose bracha is Mezonot.

A bit of foreshadowing to our next lesson: There are certain situations where the bracha on *Pat Haba B'Kisnin* will **not** be Mezonot, but rather Hamotzee. Stay tuned for details.

### Category 3 - Ma'aseh Kedaira

Until now we've been speaking about grain foods that are baked. If, however, the dough is not baked, but is **cooked**, the resulting food does not resemble bread at all. Bread has a loaf-like and dry texture; *Ma'aseh Kedaira* does not. Therefore it is considered neither bread nor *Pat Haba B'Kisnin*, and bracha is always Mezonot. The term for such foods is *Ma'aseh Kedaira*, and examples include:

- pasta
- oatmeal
- matzah balls

What about something that is fried, like a pancake? In this case, it depends how much oil is used: If the pancakes are deep-fried, that is akin to "cooking" and the pancakes are Category 3 - *Ma'aseh Kedaira*. Whereas if the pancakes are fried in just a bit of oil (i.e. to keep them from burning), then they are considered "baked" and in Category 2 - *Pat Haba B'Kisnin*. (This distinction is important in terms of whether the pancakes will be subject to the occasional exception where the bracha will be Hamotzee, as we'll discuss in the next class.)

A few more applications of these rules:

- **Donuts** -- since they are **deep-fried**, they are Category 3 - *Ma'aseh Kedeira*, with the bracha Mezonot.
- **Bagels** -- although they are cooked, they are subsequently **baked**, and the bracha is therefore Hamotzee.
- **French Toast** -- this is regular bread which is fried in only a **bit** of oil, so the bracha remains Hamotzee.