

Could You Pass the Conversion Test - Section #1 - Weekday Living:

Section #1 - Weekday Living - Class #10 Brachos (Blessings) - Part 3 - The Basics

10. Fruits and vegetables that have been processed can lose their "borei pri..." bracha. If a fruit or vegetable is crushed, ground, mashed, or otherwise manipulated in a way that it is no longer **recognizable** (i.e. to the point where no solid pieces remain), then its bracha becomes Shehakol. If, however, the fruit remains intact or is still recognizable, it maintains its original bracha.
11. If you take fresh fruits and put them in the blender, the bracha will depend on how finely you blend them. If small chunks of fruit remain, then the bracha on this fruit drink is Ha'aitz. If the drink is totally smooth, then the bracha is Shehakol.
12. Cooking fruits to the point of losing their consistency also causes their bracha to change to Shehakol. A good example of this is fruit preserves. If you can detect chunks of fruit -- what we call "jam" -- you say Ha'aitz (on apricot jam) or Ha'adama (on strawberry jam). But if there are no pieces of fruit inside -- what we call "jelly" -- you say Shehakol.
13. Produce that has a distinctive **texture** remains Ha'aitz/Ha'adama even when it is completely mashed, since it still resembles the original fruit/vegetable. Therefore, the bracha on mashed potatoes or bananas is Ha'adama (though the bracha on mashed, cooked carrots is Shehakol. The bracha on smooth-style peanut butter is Shehakol, while crunchy style would be Ha'adama.)
14. Based on this principle, we recite Shehakol on all beverages (except wine, of course), even if they are made from the five grains, such as beer and whiskey.
15. Although produce that is ground into a powder becomes Shehakol, if it returns to a form or texture that is uniquely **recognizable as the original**, then it returns to a "borei pri..." bracha. Therefore, reconstituted mashed potatoes or potato chips receive a Ha'adama, since they are clearly recognizable as potato products.
16. Onion soup made from a soup mix would depend:
 - If the soup mix is **completely powdered**, then the bracha is Shehakol -- as the onions have lost their original texture forever.
 - If there are some **slivers of onions** in the soup mix, then the bracha is Ha'adama -- since this "a form or texture that is recognizable as the original."
17. We have learned about various instances where the bracha on a fruit or vegetable is "downgraded" to Shehakol. In all of these cases, if a "borei pri..." bracha was recited instead, the bracha is still valid, since technically the food is actually a "pri."

9. Fruit & Vegetable Juices:

1. The bracha on fruit juices (i.e. orange, apple and peach juice) is Shehakol.
2. The bracha on "vegetable juice" (e.g. carrot juice, tomato juice, strawberry and banana juice) is Shehakol.
3. If you mistakenly said a Ha'aitz or Ho'adama on these drinks: If the juice is made out of the **entire fruit** (e.g. tomato juice, pear nectar) or made by cooking the fruit (e.g. prune juice), although the proper bracha is Shehakol, in these cases if you said Ha'aitz or Ho'adama, the bracha is valid.

10. Wine & Grape Juice:

1. Unlike other fruit juices, wine and grape juice are allotted their own unique bracha: "borei pri ha'gafen."

2. A beverage that intoxicates but is not made from grapes (beer, whiskey, cherry wine) does not receive a Ha'gafen. The bracha on these drinks is Shehakol.
3. Drinks made from distilled wine (e.g. brandy, cognac), the custom is to say Shehakol, due to the distilling process.
4. Wine that is watered down retains the bracha Ha'gafen -- as long as it can be served as "wine." If, however, you dilute wine to the point where it would no longer be served as wine, its bracha becomes Shehakol.
5. When diluted, grape juice easily loses its distinctive taste. Therefore, when **diluting** grape juice with any significant amount of water you can **no longer** say Ha'gafen.
6. In practice, since it can be difficult to determine whether or not the taste of wine or grape juice has been significantly diminished when diluted, it is recommended that you say Ha'gafen on **non-diluted** wine or grape juice before drinking the diluted beverage.

11. "Hagefen" Covers All Drinks:

1. The bracha on wine "covers" other beverages that you are drinking at the same time. Therefore, if you had a glass of wine and a soft drink with dinner, you would only say Ha'gafen on the wine, but no bracha on the other drink.
2. This rule **only** applies when you drink a measurement called *melo lugmav* (lit: "a cheekful"). Although opinions vary, the consensus is that **2 fluid ounces** (approx. 59 cc) is sufficient.
3. Consequently, if you are drinking **less than 2 ounces of wine**, it is questionable whether the bracha Ha'gafen covers other drinks or not. In such a case, you should say Shehakol on some food before partaking of other drinks. Another solution would be to ask someone else who is saying Shehakol to have you in mind when saying his bracha.
4. In order for Ha'gafen on wine to cover other drinks, the other beverages should be in front of you when you say Ha'gafen.
5. If the drinks are not in front of you, it is sufficient when saying Ha'gafen to "have in mind" that you will drink them.
6. If you said Ha'gafen intending **only** to drink wine, and then later decided to have another drink, that second drink requires its own Shehakol.
7. When you are invited to eat at someone else's home, you don't know what will be served. Therefore, your brachot are assumed to have been said with an all-inclusive intention. Consequently, Ha'gafen made by a guest covers any drinks that the host subsequently brings out.
8. In a home where one person prepares and serves the food, this rule applies to the other members of the household, since the standard intent when they say a bracha is that it will "cover" whatever is served to them. (Of course, this would **not** apply to the person who prepared the food.)
9. If you sat down explicitly to have a few drinks of wine, then the initial Ha'gafen also covers drinks that will be brought out later. This will only apply, however, if some of the original wine still remains when you decide to bring the new drinks out.

GRAIN PRODUCTS:

Introduction to Mezonos:

1. Since grains are the most satiating and nutritious, a special bracha was formulated: "borei minei mezonos" -- "He Who created varieties of nutritious foods." Mezonos is said on products of the following six grains: wheat, barley, spelt, oats, rye, and rice.

2. When eaten raw, the bracha on these grains is Ha'adama, since they grow from the ground. In order to be "upgraded" to the bracha Mezonos, these grains must be **processed** in a way that defines them as a "satiating baked or cooked food," rather than grains.
3. The procedure for preparing foods from grains is typically a three step process:
 - the grains are removed from their protective outer shells
 - the kernels are broken, crushed or ground
 - the kernels are cooked, or made into flour which is baked
4. Therefore, if you were to take some fresh oats from the field and cook them up, the bracha would be Ha'adama, since they have not been processed before cooking-- i.e. the outer shell has not been removed, and the oats are not broken up.
5. If, however, the oats are **cooked** to the point where they completely lose their form, it is considered equivalent to **mashing** the kernels before cooking, and they do become "mezonos."
6. Additionally, even if only the **outer shell** is removed and the oats are cooked without being broken or crushed, they become "mezonos" if they stick together as a result of the cooking.

Practical Applications of Processed Grains:

1. **Barley:** The barley available in stores today is generally milled, which means that the outer shell is removed. It is common that in the process of milling, the kernels are broken -- i.e. pieces of the barley itself are removed as well. Therefore, the bracha on cooked barley (for example, a thick, delicious barley soup) is Mezonos.
2. **Granola and Puffed Cereals:** Granola consists mainly of oats that are steamed and then baked. This process does **not** have the effect of cooking. Since the grains are considered still in their original form, the bracha on granola is Ha'adama. (If the oat particles adhere to one another, then the bracha would be Mezonos.) Note, however, that most granola bars are produced from **cooked** oats, and thus the bracha is Mezonos.
3. **Puffed cereals:** (e.g. Sugar Crisp), which are made by applying steam and/or pressure to whole grains, the bracha is Ha'adama.
4. **Hot Cereal:** Hot cereal (e.g. farina / oatmeal) is made of ground-up grains that are cooked. The bracha is therefore Mezonos.
5. **Rice:** Both white rice and whole-grain rice are sold without the outer shell in which they grow. Since rice is normally cooked whole (without further processing, unlike other grains), the bracha is Mezonos, even though the rice kernels are not broken or ground before cooking. The same is true for rice cereals (e.g. Rice Krispies) which are processed by first cooking the rice.
6. **Rice Cakes:** Since the rice is simply "puffed," the bracha is Ha'adama.
7. **Raw Flour or Dough:** If you want to eat flour or dough, the bracha is Shehakol. The reason is that when grains become flour they have not been improved. On the contrary, in their present state they are less edible and satiating than before. Therefore, the bracha is "downgraded" to Shehakol. So if you lick the cake batter from the bowl, say Shehakol.