

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

Section #1 - Weekday Living - Class #11 Brachos (Blessings) - Part 4 - Grain Products

GRAIN PRODUCTS:

Bread:

1. When 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.
2. **Bread** is defined as baked dough, consisting primarily of flour and water. It has a loaf-like and dry texture. Since it is the staple of every meal and the most essential of all foods, the Rabbis formulated a special bracha for bread: *Hamotzee lechem min ha'aretz* -- "Who brings forth bread from the ground."
3. For example: for a bagel, pita, rye bread or hot dog bun, the bracha is Hamotzee.
4. The Rabbis also required washing one's hands before eating bread. This hand-washing is known as **Netilas Yadayim**, and is required whenever Hamotzee is recited.

Pas Haba B'Kisnin:

1. **Pas Haba B'Kisnin** is defined as baked dough that does not quite resemble bread, and is generally eaten as a snack. Their Brocha is Mezonos. Examples are cake, pies, and crackers.
2. 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
3. There are three specific characteristics which define a grain food as Pas Haba B'Kisnin, and not as "bread":
4. **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."
5. 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. (e.g. cupcakes, coffee cake, honey cake and croissants)
6. **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 Mezonos. The filling must be significant enough to change the taste of the pastry.
7. Included in this category re 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.
8. Even if you decided to eat **only** the crust of an apple pie, even though this crust is no longer "filled," but since it was originally baked *with* the filling, the bracha is still Mezonos.
9. **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.
10. Included in this category are crackers, pretzels, and breadsticks.
11. There are certain situations where the bracha on Pas Haba B'Kisnin will **not** be Mezonos, but rather Hamotzee. This will be discussed later.

Ma'aseh Kedaira:

1. **Ma'aseh Kedaira** is made from grains that were cooked and have a moist texture, like pasta, oatmeal, and matzo balls.
2. The Brocha for fried pancakes will depend on how much oil is used: If the pancakes are deep-fried, that is akin to "cooking" and the pancakes are 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 are Pas Haba B'Kisnin.
3. **Donuts** are considered Ma'aseh Kedaira, since they are **deep-fried**.
4. **Bagels** - although they are cooked, they are subsequently **baked**, and the bracha is therefore Hamotzee.

5. **French Toast** -- this is regular bread which is fried in only a **bit** of oil, so the bracha remains Hamotzee.

The Mezonos Meal:

1. The bracha on **Bread**, which is made from baked dough, even if you have a very small quantity, will always be Hamotzee.
2. The bracha on **Ma'aseh Kedaira**, made from cooked grains (like spaghetti and oatmeal), will always be Mezonos. Even eating a full meal of these foods (oodles of noodles) would not warrant a Hamotzee; their bracha is always Mezonot.
3. The bracha on **Pas Haba B'Kisnin** -- e.g. cake and crackers will depend. When eaten as a **snack**, the bracha on cake (or any Pas Haba B'Kisnin) is Mezonos, since it is not actually bread. **However**, when eaten as **meal** (i.e. in place of bread), that cake attains the status of bread and its bracha is Hamotzee. (You would also need to wash *Netilas Yadayim* before eating this cake, and say the full Grace After Meals.)
4. A snack becomes a meal when you eat an amount called **Kiday Seudah** -- lit: "the amount of a meal." This is judged according to the **amount of bread** that people normally eat in a meal. If you would eat this corresponding **amount of cake/crackers**, then the bracha on the cake/crackers is Hamotzee. When eating less than this amount of cake/crackers, it retains the status of Pas Haba B'Kisnin, i.e. a snack, and the bracha is Mezonos.
5. When determining this volume, you must take into account whether the cake/crackers is being eaten **together with other foods**, or if it is being eaten alone
6. If you are eating Pas Haba B'Kisnin **together** with other foods (for example, crackers with tuna fish), then if you eat crackers equivalent to the amount of bread that you would normally eat along with tuna fish in a meal, the crackers are being "eaten in place of bread," and the bracha on the crackers is Hamotzee.
7. If you are eating Pas Haba B'Kisnin **alone**, then Hamotzee is appropriate only if you eat a quantity equivalent to the amount of bread you'd eat alone as a filling meal. This is a larger quantity of cake/crackers than the first case. For example, a normal bread meal is **three slices of bread** (the volume of 4 eggs); so if you eat that equivalent amount of *Pas Haba B'Kisnin*, you'd say Hamotzee.
8. If the Pas Haba B'Kisnin alone "fills you up" like a meal, then Hamotzee is appropriate even if you are only eating the amount that one would normally eat along with other foods.
9. **Therefore, if you are at an elaborate kiddush where you plan on eating cake, crackers, gefilte fish, chopped liver, egg salad and cholent, etc.; if you plan to fill up on these foods, you should first wash Netilas Yadayim and say Hamotzee on some cake or crackers.**
10. Generally, a Pas Haba B'Kisnin eaten as dessert -- e.g. cake -- is covered by the original Hamotzee. However, if the food fulfills **all three** characteristics of *Pat Haba B'Kisnin* -- i.e. it is sweet dough, **and** filled, **and** thin/crispy -- then you **do** say Mezonos when eating this for dessert. Examples of this are: wafers, cherry pie whose crust is very thin and flaky, napoleons, and blintzes made of a very thin dough wrapping.
11. Since rice is not considered as important as the other five grains, the bracha on rice -- and even "rice bread" -- is **always** Mezonos.
12. Since **Matza** is generally eaten **in place of bread**, it has the status of bread, which requires Hamotzee. However, the bracha on "Matza crackers," when **not** eaten in place of bread, is Mezonos.
13. The bracha on pizza is determined based on your specific intention. If you are eating pizza as a meal, say Hamotzee; as a snack, say Mezonos.
14. If you say Mezonos on Pas Haba B'Kisnin with the intention of having a snack, and then, after eating a little, you decide to eat a lot more, where the total amount you'll be consuming is *Kiday Seudah* and would have required Hamotzee. What should you do now? If the amount to yet be consumed is enough to **independently** require Hamotzee, then you should say Hamotzee on the remainder, and wash *Netilat Yadayim*. If the remaining food would **not** require Hamotzee, then Hamotzee is not said. (Although even in this case, the after-bracha is the full Grace After Meals, since you ended up eating the volume of a meal.)