

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

Section #1 - Weekday Living - Class #18 Brachos - Part 11

Brocha Achrona – Introduction:

1. We are required to say a bracha after we **finish** eating. This is called **bracha achrona** -- literally, the final blessing, or colloquially called the "after-bracha."
2. To say a bracha achrona on solid food, you have to consume at least a **kezayit** of food (literally: the size of an olive). In today's terms, this is estimated as slightly less than **one fluid ounce, or 30 cc.**
3. If you have a small piece of dough, which when baked into a brownie, is **exactly** one *kezayit*, this qualifies for a *bracha achrona*, because we measure based on how the item stands at the moment, despite that we know it rose from baking.
4. If you ate a piece of cake that is exactly one *kezayit*, this is unlike a brownie whose consistency is dense. Cake is generally a bit puffy, so in fact part of the *kezayit* consists of air holes. So is that piece of cake considered a *kezayit* to warrant a *bracha achrona*? The answer is: it depends. If the air holes are small enough to be "intangible" (i.e. not obviously noticeable), then that piece of cake is regarded as a *kezayit* -- the small air holes contribute toward the calculated volume. However, a piece of "sponge cake" is so puffed up that in measuring the *kezayit* we do **not** count the air holes, but would need to take extra to compensate for the loss.
5. If you have a piece of cake that is a *kezayit*, but then you **compress it to less than a kezayit**, even though it still represents the same quantity of food, since this cake is now "smaller than a *kezayit*," you do **not** say a *bracha achrona*.
6. In order to be called an "act of eating" that requires a *bracha achrona*, the *kezayit* of food must minimally be consumed in ***kiday achilat pras*** (literally, "the time it takes to eat a portion"). Practically speaking:
 - **3 minutes** is the standard time period of *kiday achilat pras*.
 - **4 minutes** - At a stretch, if you consumed a *kezayit* within 4 minutes, you should still say a *bracha achrona*.
 - **More than 4 minutes** - If it took more than 4 minutes to consume the *kezayit*, then you should not say a *bracha achrona*.
7. The minimum measurement to qualify for a *bracha achrona* on a liquid is one ***revi'it*** (lit: "quarter of a loge," a Talmudic measurement). In modern terms, a *revi'it* is measured as **4.5 fluid ounces, or 133 cc.**
8. Other opinions say that drinking as little as one fluid ounce (30 cc) -- i.e. the same *kezayit* measure that we use for solids also qualifies for saying a *bracha achrona*. Therefore, to avoid getting into a situation of doubt, **it is best to drink either less than 1 oz, or more than 4.5 oz.**
9. In order to be called an "act of drinking" that requires a *bracha achrona*, the *revi'it* must be consumed ***kiday shetiyat revi'it*** (literally, the time it takes to drink a *revi'it*). To avoid any halachic doubt, you should drink the 4.5 ounces in two gulps, with only a short pause in between, or at least continuous sipping within 30 seconds. If you did **not** drink that quickly, you would not say a *bracha achrona* on the drink.
10. The rules for a food that is thicker than a regular liquid, for example yogurt or ice cream, is that it is considered a solid. (that requires a *kezayit* consumed in 3-4 minutes),

11. Clear broth soup, even though it is eaten with a spoon, it follows the rules of a liquid.
12. If you ate some food, but can't recall if it was enough to be a *kezayit*, or if you lost track of time and don't know if you ate a *kezayit* within 3-4 minutes (*kiday achilat pras*), then you cannot say a *bracha achrona*. This is based on the principle of **safek brachot l'hakel** -- in cases of doubtful blessings, don't say the blessing. However, you could eat an additional *kezayit* within 3-4 minutes in order to obligate yourself to now say a *brocha achrona*. Or you could get someone else who is obligated in this particular *bracha achrona* to say the *bracha*, while having in mind to cover you as well.
13. The same rules basically apply if you are in doubt as to whether or not you said a *bracha achrona* or not.

Which Bracha Achrona to Say:

1. There are three kinds of Bracha Achrona:
 - **(1) Grace After Meals (Birkat Hamazon)** - said after eating a meal that included bread, or a meal-sized portion of other grain foods.
 - **(2) The Three-Faceted Blessing** - said after eating mezonot foods, wine, and certain fruits.
 - **(3) Borei Nefashot** - the "miscellaneous" after-bracha that covers drinks, vegetables, meat, and more.
2. The Three-Faceted Blessing (*Bracha M'ain Shalosh*) -- so called because it resembles the first three blessings of Birkat Hamazon -- is said if you ate a minimum quantity of either: 1) mezonot foods -- e.g. one of the five grains (wheat, barley, spelt, oats, rye -- but **not** rice), whether baked, fried or cooked (but not whole roasted kernels); 2) wine or grape juice; 3) the "five fruits" -- olives, dates, grapes, figs or pomegranate (fresh or dry)
3. However, the text of the bracha varies slightly depending on which of these food types you have consumed. Colloquially, the *bracha achrona* for each type is referred to by how the text starts:

mezonot foods	<i>Al Ha'michya</i>
wine or grape juice	<i>Al Ha'gefen</i>
the "five fruits"	<i>Al Ha'aitz</i>

4. For wine and fruits, the closing words of the Three-Faceted Blessing differ depending on whether the produce grew in Israel or in the Diaspora, due to the extra holiness of the Land of Israel which affects even the produce.
5. The Three-Faceted Blessing has an extra phrase inserted for Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh and holidays. If you forgot to add this line, post facto the bracha is still valid.
6. If you've consumed a sufficient quantity of more than one of these products, for example, you had a large plate of pasta with some tasty white wine (within the required time frame). Rather than making two separate after-brachot, you should say **one** Three-Faceted Blessing, **combining** the opening and concluding texts of both *Al Ha'michya* and *Al Ha'gefen*.

7. When combining these into one blessing, the various phrases are said in this order of priority:
1) *Al Ha'michya*; 2) *Al Ha'efen*; 3) *Al Ha'aitz*
8. If you needed to say more than one part -- e.g. you ate pasta and drank wine -- but in saying the *bracha achrona* you mistakenly said only the words for *Al Ha'michya*, you need to say another full bracha of *Al Ha'gefen*. Even if you realized your mistake in the middle of the first bracha, you should not try to correct yourself, but rather complete the bracha and then say the full second bracha.
9. The after-bracha for **all other foods** is *Borei Nefashot*. This covers, for example:
1) vegetables, meat, fish, dairy products; 2) fruits (other than olives, dates, etc. which are of the seven species and require the Three-Faceted Blessing); 3) drinks (other than wine and grape juice which require the Three-Faceted Blessing) ; 4) rice which is an exception: although its bracha rishona is *Mezonot*, its *bracha achrona* is *Borei Nefashot*
10. If you drank enough wine to obligate the saying of *Al Ha'gefen*, then you **do not** say a *bracha achrona* on any other drink (e.g. lemonade) that would normally warrant its own *Borei Nefashot*.
11. The bracha of *Al Ha'gefen* also covers any **grapes** that you ate, post-facto.
12. If you ate enough of the "five fruits" to obligate the saying of *Al Ha'aitz*, then you **do not** say a *bracha achrona* on any other fruit that would normally warrant its own *Borei Nefashot*.
13. *Al Ha'aitz* only covers other fruits (i.e. whose bracha *rishona* is *Ha'aitz*), but **not** foods whose *bracha rishona* is *Ha'adama*.

Bracha Achrona on Mixtures:

1. We learned about the concept of *ikar v'tafel* (primary and secondary ingredients). For example, if you have a hot dog with ketchup, your *bracha rishona* is determined by whichever ingredient you desire, and/or by the majority ingredient -- in this case, the hot dog is obviously the *ikar*. The same rule applies to a *bracha achrona*: You say only a bracha on the *ikar*, and not on the *tafel*.
2. For example: If you ate crackers with peanut butter, mezonot is always considered the *ikar* in a mixture. So the rule is quite simple: Just as your bracha on the crackers "covered" the peanut butter, so too your *bracha achrona* of *Al Ha'michya* means that you do not need a separate *bracha achrona* on the peanut butter.
3. However, this only applies because the peanut butter and crackers were eaten as an *ikar v'tafel*, with one *bracha rishona* covering both foods. But otherwise, if you eat mezonot foods to obligate the saying of *Al Ha'michya*, this does **not** obviate the need a *bracha achrona* on any non-mezonot food. For example: If you ate pretzels and then a bar of chocolate, you need to say *Al Ha'michya*, followed by *Borei Nefashot*.
4. If you ate vegetables and meat, the *bracha achrona* (assuming you ate a *kezayit* quickly enough) is a foregone conclusion -- both of these foods get a *Borei Nefashot*. Therefore you don't need a *kezayit* of any individual ingredient to say *Borei Nefashot* -- they can "join together" to form the required *kezayit*.
5. In a case where the after-brachot are different -- e.g. you ate a half-*kezayit* of crackers and a half-*kezayit* of apple, The proper *bracha achrona* is *Borei Nefashot*. The reason is because the apple cannot "go up" in status to combine

and obligate *Al HaMichya*, but the cracker can "go down" to obligate a *Borei Nefashot*.

6. If you drank a half-*revi'it* of orange juice and a half-*revi'it* of soda, they combine to obligate a *Borei Nefashot*.
7. If you ate a half-*kezayit* of food and drank a half-*revi'it* of drink, these **do not** combine together to obligate a *Borei Nefashot*. However, with a thick vegetable soup, the liquid broth and the vegetable chunks are eaten together as one food, and thus combine to obligate a *Borei Nefashot*.
8. If you ate a piece of chocolate cake that was precisely one *kezayit* in size, which contains approximately one half-*kezayit* of wheat flour, and one half-*kezayit* of other ingredients -- sugar, margarine, eggs, etc. In terms of which *bracha achrona* to say, the custom differs: 1) The mezonot combines with the other ingredients to form a *kezayit*, and therefore you say *Al Ha'michya*. 2) *Al Ha'michya* is not recited unless a **full *kezayit* of mezonot** is consumed. If not, the proper *bracha achrona* is *Borei Nefashos*. In any event, the best option is to avoid this issue altogether, by eating a piece of cake that contains a full *kezayit* of flour.
9. What do you do in a situation where you have a few different after-brachot to say? For example, you ate fish and salad for your main course, and fresh dates for dessert. Here you'll have to say *Borei Nefashot* to cover the fish and salad, and *Al Ha'aitz* for the dates. In this case you should say the *Al Ha'aitz* first, because of the following rule: **The Three-Faceted Blessing, due to its importance, takes priority over *Borei Nefashot*.**
10. However, if there would be only salad and dates, then *Borei Nefashot* would come first. The reason is because in the Three-Faceted Blessing, we say "*v'al tenuvat ha'sadeh*" (which means, "...and on the produce of the field"). Thus, if it would be said first, according to some opinions, it would make the *Borei Nefashot* redundant. Therefore, in such a case the *Borei Nefashot* should be said first. However, when consuming shehakol foods that do not grow from the ground (e.g. meat, cheese, water, etc.), the Three-Faceted Blessing should be said first, because of its importance.