

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

Section #1 - Weekday Living - Class #22 - Miscellaneous Laws of Blessings:

Wine at a Meal:

1. In order to thank God for our abundance of wine, the Sages ordained that the bracha of Ha'tov v'Hamativ should be recited upon drinking "new" wine after having drunk a different type of wine.
2. This is contingent on the following conditions:
 - The new wine is not at all inferior to the original wine.
 - The original wine is not finished.
 - At least two people will drink from both wines.
 - The new wine is not being used for Birchas Hamazon (Grace After Meals).
3. According to many authorities, the bracha may even be said upon drinking wine after grape juice, pending the above conditions.
4. Multiple people can say the bracha Ha'tov v'Hamativ at the same meal.
5. If both wines are on the table simultaneously, it is proper to say Ha'gafen on the wine which is believed to be superior, despite the fact that you will no longer be able to say Ha'tov v'Hamativ.

Hearing of a Death:

1. The Talmud says that we should "bless God for (perceived) bad experiences just as we bless Him for the good." This means that we should humbly accept whatever God sends us, even if we cannot comprehend His justice.
2. The blessing "Baruch Dayan Ha'Emes" is recited upon the death of an immediate relative (parent, sibling, spouse or child).
3. Technically, this blessing may be recited as soon as one hears of the death but traditionally it is said at the funeral, immediately before performing *kriyah*, the ritual tearing of the garment.
4. Upon hearing of the death of any person, the custom is to say the words, "Baruch Dayan Ha'Emes," omitting the name of God.

Birchas HaGomel:

1. Upon safely completing a significant journey, one should say the blessing HaGomel to thank God for the successful trip. This blessing is recited after any air travel over an ocean or lengthy boat trip. Sefardim also recite this blessing after completing a lengthy car or train ride, but Ashkenazim only do so only if they faced particular danger along the way. The text of this blessing and the congregational response to it is find in all Siddurim.
 2. This blessing may only be recited in the presence of a minyan, typically after the reading of the Torah in synagogue.
 3. The blessing should be said at the first such opportunity, ideally within three days of the conclusion of the journey.
 4. If many people need to say HaGomel at the same time, preferably one person should recite the blessing on behalf of them all.
 5. There are different opinions as to whether a woman makes this blessing.
- The HaGomel blessing is also recited by anyone who recently underwent a dangerous experience, such as:
- one who recovered from a serious illness

- a woman who gave birth
- anyone who was in a life-threatening situation, such as an auto accident or terror attack

Traveler's Prayer:

1. When undertaking an intercity journey, travelers recite a special prayer for safety and success. In the prayer, one may also mention anticipated perils that will be unique to his personal journey. The text of this prayer is found in all Siddurim.
2. This prayer is said once per day. It should be said toward the beginning of the trip, but only after leaving the confines of the city.
3. If you did not say the prayer at the beginning of your trip, you may say it later on during the trip, provided that you still have a long distance yet to travel that day.
4. The traveler's prayer should preferably be said immediately following another bracha. For example, you could say Shehakol, take a drink of water, and then say the traveler's prayer.

Blessings on Fragrances:

1. The blessing is said **before** smelling the item. If you are not sure whether the fragrance is strong enough or enjoyable, you can smell it first to check, and then smell it again with a bracha.
2. A blessing may be said only on an aroma which is appreciated by the one doing the smelling. Therefore a bracha may **not** be said by someone who does not enjoy that particular aroma, or who has a poor sense of smell or a stuffed nose.
3. You should recite a new bracha on a subsequent smelling, even many times a day.
4. A fragrance used to overcome bad odors, such as deodorant, air freshener, or soap, does not warrant a blessing.
5. These blessings can also be recited on a derived product – e.g. perfume.
6. However, there is a debate if one makes a blessing on synthetic fragrances / perfumes. Generally speaking, we make the blessing “Borei Minei Besomim” on expensive perfumes.
7. Common tea does not require a blessing. However, many herbal teas are quite fragrant, and would require a blessing on the tea bag.
8. No blessing is made on hot, fresh pastries or other cooked foods.
9. There are four different blessings said upon enjoying the aroma of trees and flowers.

Type 1 - Fragrant Wood:

A blessing is recited upon deriving pleasure from the fragrance of a woody tree or bush (or their products) that meets all three conditions:

1. It grows with bark.
2. The bark-covered stem/trunk normally grows to a height of more than approximately 10 inches (24 cm). This would exclude, for example, mint.
3. It normally produces leaves directly from the stem, trunk or branches – not just from the fruit or flowers.

Included in this category are roses, carnations, eucalyptus, myrtle, pine, lavender, rosemary, jasmine, and citrus blossoms.

The blessing ends with the words: “**Borei Atzei Vi’samim.**”