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Practical Guide To Brachos



Table of Contents

I. Introduction

II. General Rules of Reciting Brachot

Ikar Ve'tafel	3
Pas Haba Bikisnin - Simon Italiaander	4
Making a Meal on Pas Haba Bikisnin - Simon Italiaander.....	6
Order of Brochos - Yakov Deutscher	7
Shinui Makom - David Silber	9
Shiur of K'zayis - Zak Shayne	11
Making One Hundred Brachot Daily - Noam Itzhak.....	12
Amen – Dubbin Hanon	13
Accidentally Eating Without a Bracha - Dubbin Hanon	15

III. How to Recite a Proper Beracha

Kavana During Brachot – Jeremy Perlow	16
Where Can One Recite Brachos? - Ben Kean	17
Brachot Through a Microphone - Mordechai Djavaheri	18

IV. Meal

Bracha on Foods in a Meal - Yaakov Abramovitz	18
Bracha on Desserts in a Meal - Yaakov Abramovitz.....	20
Netilat Yadayim - Ben Kean.....	21
Mayim Achronim - Noam Itzhak.....	23

V. Specific Foods

Pizza - Dani Caplan	25
Bamba - Mordechai Djavaheri.....	26
Granola Bars - Ike Sultan.....	26

Preface

With Hakadosh Baruch Hu's chesed we merited to put together an exciting collection of halachot of Brachos. As we reach this milestone, it is without doubt due to certain individuals who deserve proper recognition. Firstly, we would like to thank Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Mordechai Willig, who reviewed the Halachas of the packet. We would like to thank the editors who spent a lot of time researching the topics and working on the articles. Our editors include: Tzvi Benoff, Josh Blau, Adam Brasch, Dubbin Hanon, Jeremy Perlow, Uri Schneider, Russel Spiewak, Motti Sturm, and Ike Sultan. Ben Sultan designed the cover. The printing was thanks to SOY and its prestigious board members including: Jacob Bernstein, Natan Bienstock, Tuvya Miller, Ari Marks, and David Weiss.

Introduction

Many of us go through our busy days and struggle to regularly think about Hashem. On an intellectual level, we understand that it is essential to constantly imagine ourselves before Hashem; yet, on a practical level, this goal appears lofty and often beyond reach. Nonetheless, it is specifically for this reason that our Sages instituted berachot, to assist us in maintaining this critical awareness, "so that we will always remember the Creator."¹ This idea is alluded in the very first word of every blessing, "baruch," which comes from the word "breicha" "spring." The same way a spring serves as a constant source of water to all of its surroundings, so too, we must

¹ Rambam Hilchot Berachot 1:3

recognize that Hashem is the source of everything in our lives.² Accordingly, the Mishna states that “A person must bless God on the bad, just as he must bless Him for the good.”³

With this overview, the reason brachot use the second person, “ata,” is clear. Each bracha serves as a reminder of Hashem’s constant presence in our lives.⁴ Chazal felt it was essential that each individual recite 100 berachot everyday, as each one of these 100 berachot requires concentrated, verbal acknowledgment that Hashem is directly in front of us and involved in every aspect of our lives. The Sefer HaChinuch writes that the “Purpose of saying berachot to Hashem is only to awaken our souls through the words of our mouths.”⁵ Through learning the laws of berachot and by striving to recite each bracha with care, may we merit to feel Hashem’s constant presence in our lives at all times.

Ikar Ve’tafel - Yitzchak Radner

I. General Rules of Ikar Ve’tafel

1. Situations exhibiting an ikar ve’tafel relationship include both when:
 - a. Two entities are intermixed and eaten together
 - b. Two entities are eaten one after another deliberately so that one entity will completely serve the other.⁶
2. Some poskim hold that if one is eating a tafel food prior to eating the ikar that the tafel requires its own bracha.⁷ This should ideally be avoided.⁸
3. The tafel is excused from both its normal⁹ bracha rishona and bracha achrona.¹⁰

II. Identifying the Primary and Secondary¹¹

² Rashba (responsum 1:423)

³ Berachot 9:5

⁴ Midrash Shocheh Tov, chp. 16. At the same time, the Tshuvat Ha’Rashba Vol 5, 52 explains that every bracha also ends in third person (i.e. “who does such and such”). Thus, the Rashba explains that in every bracha we are reminded both that Hashem is directly in front of us and that His true essence is above and beyond any human comprehension.

⁵ Chinuch, 430

⁶ Tur and S”A (212:1). Aruch HaShulchan (212:1-2) discusses two scenarios of ikar ve’tafel: 1) Where the tafel forms one food unit with the ikar, as the two components are eaten in one spoonful. 2) Where the tafel is eaten deliberately subsequent, but proximate to the ikar.

⁷ Maharach Ohr Zarua (responsum 38) rules to recite a Shehakol on small fruit eaten to generate a sweet flavor in the mouth to enhance the subsequently quaffed drink. In light of the Ohr Zarua, Terumas HaDeshen (responsum 31) extrapolates that any tafel consumed prior to the ikar deserves its own bracha rishona, albeit, a watered down bracha. Rama 212:1 paskins that a tafel item eaten prior to the ikar requires a bracha, but its typical bracha is demoted to a Shehakol. See Magen Avraham (212:4) who disagrees and holds that the bracha of the ikar food should be recited on the tafel.

⁸ Mishnah Brurah 212:10

⁹ The Chazon Ish (27:9) explains that a tafel is never excused from a bracha rishona. Rather, the tafel is excused from its own typical bracha because it is subsumed under the ikar and, therefore, covered by the bracha recited on the ikar.

¹⁰ Shulchan Aruch 212:1 based on Brachos 41b. See Kol Bo (n. 24) who is uncertain about this.

¹¹ The two basic factors in defining “ikar” (primary) and “tafel” (secondary) are objective significance and subjective significance. See Pri Megadim (Preface to Hilchos Birkas ha’Peiros note 11) where he develops a hierarchy of objective significance, including foods comprising a quantitative majority, the five grains, and flavoring agents.

4. Subjectively speaking, *ikar* can be defined as the food that primarily compels one to eat the secondary food,¹² and *tafel* can be defined as a food that accommodates or enhances¹³ the consumption of the primary food. Accordingly, the bracha typically made on french fries dipped in ketchup is *Haadama* and not *Shehakol* because the food that compels one to eat is the french fries, while the ketchup serves to enhance the consumption of the french fries.
5. Foods made with the five grains are *Mezonot* since the five grains are objectively more significant than other foods.¹⁴ Thus, flour's high rank overwhelms the sugar and liquids in a chocolate cake, thereby warranting a *Mezonos* on the cake and not a *Shehakol*.
6. In general, objective significance is eclipsed by subjective purpose. Therefore, eating cake to temper the bitterness of a shot of whiskey demotes the cake to a status of *tafel*, notwithstanding the objective significance of flour.¹⁵

Pas Haba Bikisnin - Simon Italiaander

1. *Pas haba bikisnin* can be defined as one of the following three things:¹⁶
 - a. **Dough filled with a sweet filling**- such as a pastry dough filled with fruit, chocolate, nuts, etc.¹⁷

¹² Rashi Brachos 41a s.v. She'hayah

¹³ See Rashi (Brachos 41a s.v. She'hayah Tz'non *ikar*) with regards to an olive eaten to temper the sharpness of a radish. See also Rashi (Brachos 41b s.v. Devarim ha'Ba'im) with regards to foods eaten in a meal to enhance bread.

¹⁴ Brachos 36b states that anything containing any of the five grains deserves a *Mezonos*. S"A 208:2 codifies this gemara. Rambam (Hilchos Brachos 3:4-7) understands this principle to be a function of *ikar ve'tafel*. Accordingly, Tosfos (Brachos 36b s.v. kol she'yaish) write that the flour in a mixture warrants a *Mezonos* only when the flour serves to satiate, and not merely to hold the components together. While Tosfos do not mention explicitly that this principle is a function of *ikar ve'tafel*, the Rosh (Brachos 6:7) does, explaining that flour serving as a binder is not considered *ikar*. However, the Ritva (Brachos 47a s.v. ha'koseis) learns that the five grains are an exception to the typical rules of *ikar ve'tafel*, warranting a *Mezonos* even when not assuming the role of *ikar* in a food.

¹⁵ M.B 212:5. The Mishnah in Brachos 44a rules that the bracha recited on an *ikar* excuses the need for an additional bracha on the *tafel* if the consumer had both in mind when reciting a bracha on the *ikar*. Thus, when bread is secondary to a salty dish, one recites a bracha only on the salty dish (Tosfos Brachos 44a s.v. be'Ochlei peiros and S"A 212:1). However, it is important to note that the Mishnah Brurah (212:5 s.v. "ve'achar") paskins that a bracha on the bread would be in order if one had an appetite for it as well. Furthermore, based on a Shlah, the Mishnah Brurah advises to avoid such a situation of using bread to temper the effects of the whiskey, as it is difficult to ascertain definitively that one has no appetite for the bread itself.

In a slightly similar vein, R. Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe 4:43) paskins that for strudel (fruit-filled pastry), one who would enjoy the pastry alone can make a *Mezonos* on the pastry followed by a *Ha'eitz* on the fruit. Similarly, for ice-cream wafers, if one would enjoy the wafer alone, one can make a *Mezonos* followed by a *Shehakol*. R. Moshe explains that many people enjoy the *Mezonos* part alone, thereby warranting a separate bracha for those who desire the *Mezonos* part. Similarly, for cereal and milk, a bracha is also recited upon the milk if one would enjoy it independently of the cereal and drink it separately. Comparably, R. Moshe paskins that chicken soup with *k'neidel* warrants only a *Mezonos* unless the chicken soup will be eaten separately from the *k'neidel*.

¹⁶ All three are mentioned in S"A OC 168:8

¹⁷ Rabbenu Chananel, Aruch (Brachot 42b s.v. Kesen) and Rashba cited in Beit Yosef 168:8

- b. **Cake-** bread kneaded with any liquid other than water (eggs, honey, or fruit juice), or a heavy amount of spice or flavoring (chocolate, sugar, nutmeg).¹⁸
 - c. **Crackers-** dry, thin, and brittle bread primarily eaten as a snack and not as a main meal.¹⁹
2. In order to fit the category of “dough filled with a sweet filling,” it must meet the following criteria:
- a. The filling must noticeably affect the taste of the pastry.²⁰
 - b. The filling must not be a “meal” food, for example meat, fish, cheese, or vegetables (unless the pastry is clearly made to be eaten as a snack)²¹

<i>Pas Haba Bikisnin</i> (since it is eaten as a snack)	<i>Hamotzi</i> (since it is eaten as a meal type food)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cookies ● Franks in blanks²² ● Rugelach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meat Pie²³ ● <i>Challah</i> with some raisins²⁴

3. In order to fit the category of “cake” the flavor needs to be the dominant taste in the dough, thus giving it the status of Mezonot rather than lechem.²⁵

<i>Pas Haba Bikisnin</i> (since it has a dominant flavor)	<i>Hamotzi</i> (since it is a meal type food)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cake ● Muffin, cupcake ● Croissant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Honey challah^{26,27}

4. Unlike the other two categories that must differ from bread in their **taste**, the third category can taste just like bread, but must differ in **form**. The hard and dry physical qualities of this “bread” set it apart from bread normally used during a meal.

<i>Pas Haba Bikisnin</i> (since it is eaten as a snack)	<i>Hamotzi</i> (since it is a meal type food)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hard pretzels ● Crackers, Wheat Thins ● Breadsticks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Matzos²⁸ ● Toast²⁹

¹⁸ Rambam Hil. Brachot 3:9

¹⁹ Rav Hai Gaon cited in Beit Yosef 168

²⁰ M”B 168:33

²¹ S”A O.C. 168:17

²² Rabbi Forst, The Laws of Brachos p. 235

²³ Rabbi Forst, The Laws of Brachos p. 236

²⁴ Pri Migadim M.Z. 168:7

²⁵ Rama 168:7 and M.B 168:33 write that the minhag of Ashkenazim is that if the majority of the liquid added to the flour is from sweeteners then Mezonot is recited. S”A 168:7 and Yalkut Yosef (Brachot pg 129, Kitzur S”A 168:7) write that if the taste of the sweeteners is recognizable in the dough, then the Bracha is Mezonot.

²⁶ At least for Ashkenazim. For Sephardim, Kaf HaChaim 168:58, Or Letzion (vol 2, 12:4), and Chazon Ovadyah (Brachot pg 55) based on Shulchan Aruch 168:7 rule that sweet challah is Mezonot if one can taste the sweetness in the challah.

²⁷ Rabbi Forst, The Laws of Brachos p.237, Vezot HaBracha (pg 19, chapter 19 and pg 386) in name of Rav Elyashiv, and Or Letzion (Vol 2, 12:4).

Making a Meal on Pas Haba Bikisnin - Simon Italiaander

1. When a person eats *pas haba bikisnin* in an amount that constitutes an entire meal,³⁰ we treat that *pas haba bikisnin* as true *lechem*. Most poskim maintain that this amount is measured by the normal eating habits of each country.³¹ Once this *pas haba bikisnin* is halachically treated as *lechem*, one should wash hands and recite *Al Netilas Yadayim*, *Hamotzi*, and *Birkas Ha'mazon*.³²
2. Therefore, a person who eats an amount of cake equal to the amount of bread a person of his type (age, weight, etc.) would eat for dinner, has established a *halachic* meal. He should wash hands and recite *Al Netilas Yadayim*, *Hamotzi*, and *Birkas Ha'mazon*.³³
3. If a person eats cake or crackers together with other substantial foods (e.g. tuna, meat), and the amount of cake or crackers is equal to the amount of bread one would eat with a meal of the same dish, then he must wash *netilas yadayim* and recite *Hamotzi* and *Birkas Ha'mazon*.³⁴

I Didn't Mean to Make a Meal on My Pas Haba Bikisnin!

4. The rules of making a meal out of *pas haba bikisnin* affect both the *bracha rishona* and the *bracha acharona*. Cake as a snack requires *Mezonot* and *Al Ha'michya*, while cake as a meal requires *Hamotzi* and *Birkat Ha'mazon*. If one decides, while eating, to eat more than he originally planned, whether or not he should recite *Hamotzi* depends only on the amount he **intends** to eat. Contrastingly, reciting *Al Ha'michya* or *Birkat Ha'mazon* is determined by the amount one **actually** eats.³⁵

Example: Since five slices of coffee cake constitutes as “a meal”...³⁶

- a. One who recited *Mezonos* on one slice of coffee cake he already ate, and then decided to eat an **additional** five slices of coffee cake, must wash and recite *Netilas Yadayim* and *Hamotzi*.³⁷ He does not need to recite *Al Ha'michya* on the first slice, because the *Birkas Ha'mazon* after the five slices covers the first slice.³⁸

²⁸ Vezot HaBracha (pg 20), Tzitz Eliezer 11:19. R' Ovadia Yosef writes in y'chave da'at 3:12 that Sefardim make a Mezonot on matzos, except on Pesach where the matzos becomes replacement for bread.

²⁹ Kaf Ha'Chaim 168:66 writes that toast is Hamotzi since originally baked as bread retains its *lechem* status.

³⁰ The halachic consensus defines a meal according to the eating habits of a “normal person,” not according to the eating habits of the individual. So even if one typically eats large meals and is not full after eating the meal of a “normal person,” he should still wash and say Hamotzi and Birkas Ha'mazon. Similarly, if one typically eats small meals and is full after half of a “normal person's” meal, he should neither wash, nor say Hamotzi or Birkas Ha'mazon; rather, he should merely recite Mezonos and Al Ha'michya.

³¹ The poskim debate the source for a “normal person's” meals. Some authorities (Machatzis Ha'shekel S”A O.C. 168:13) derive it from the halacha of eiruv t'chumin (4 eggs), and some (S”A Harav 168:8) maintain that a “normal meal” should be calculated according to the manna that the Jews ate in the desert (21 eggs). However, most poskim (Gra 168, Mishna Brurah 168:24, Igros Moshe O.C. 3:32) reject both of these opinions and maintain that the amount is measured by the normal eating habits of each country.

³² S”A O.C. 168:6

³³ Rabbi Binyomin Forst, The Laws of B'rachos p. 250

³⁴ Ibid. p. 251

³⁵ Ibid p. 252

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ M”B 168:26

³⁸ Kitzur S”A 48:4

- b. If one decided to eat only four additional slices, no new *bracha* is needed, because four slices do not constitute “a meal.”³⁹ After finishing the five slices, one must recite *Birkas Ha'mazon*, because the total of five slices constitutes as “a meal.”⁴⁰
- c. If, in the second case, one recited *Al Ha'michya* before deciding to eat the additional cake, the four slices have no connection to the first slice. Thus, when one continues to eat, he recites a new *Mezonos*, and afterwards only an *Al Ha'michya*.⁴¹
- d. If one initially planned to eat five slices of cake, and therefore washed and recited *Netilas Yadayim* and *Hamotzi*, but after eating one slice decided to eat only one additional slice, no new *bracha* is required.⁴² Upon finishing the two slices, *Al Ha'michya* should be recited.

Order of Brochos - Yakov Deutscher

Foods of Different Berachos

1. If one has many foods of different berachos in front of him which he currently desires to eat, he should recite the brachot on the foods in front of him in the following order: Hamotzi, Mezonos, Hagefen, Ha'etz or Ha'adama, and Shehakol.⁴³
2. This order does not change even if one of the foods is from the shivas haminim or one of the foods is preferred to the person making the bracha.⁴⁴
3. If one has a Ha'etz food and a Ha'adama food, the usually preferred one takes precedence. If both or neither are preferred, then shivas haninim takes precedence (within the order mentioned below). If both or neither are preferred and neither are shivas haminim, then Ha'etz takes precedence over Ha'adama.⁴⁵
4. If one inadvertently recited the berachos in the wrong order, the berachos are still valid.⁴⁶

Foods of the Same Bracha

1. If the foods in front of him have the same bracha, then the hierarchy of foods to make the bracha on is as follows: shivas haminim, complete food, preferred food.⁴⁷

Types of Bread

³⁹ M"B 168:26

⁴⁰ S"A O.C. 168:6

⁴¹ Bircas Ha'bayis O.C. 2:54

⁴² Igros Moshe O.C. 2:54

⁴³ M.B 211:35

⁴⁴ M.B 211:35

⁴⁵ S"A 211:3 writes that if one has a Ha'etz or Ha'adama food one may make either bracha first, and some say that ha'etz takes precedence. M.B 211:18 writes that we are strict for the second opinion; yet, the concern of preference for shivas haminim overrides this. Therefore, M.B 211:18 rules that ha'adama on roasted wheat precedes ha'etz for an apple. See summary of this halacha in M.B 211:35.

⁴⁶ Vesein Bracha (Halachos of Brochos by Rabbi Bodner, chapter 11, pg 182)

⁴⁷ S"A 211:1 brings two opinions; the first opinion (Behag) is that when there are two foods which have the same bracha, if one is the shivas haminim, one should make the bracha on the shivas haminim. However, the second opinion (Rambam) holds that we go by whichever food is more preferred. M.B 211:13 writes that it's implied from S"A that halacha accords with the first opinion which was brought as an anonymous opinion as opposed to the second which was brought as a minority opinion. S"A 168:1 writes that a food being whole is more significant than being preferable. Vesein Bracha (Halachos of Brochos by Rabbi Bodner pg 167-170, chapter 11) brings these three (shivas haminim, complete, and preferred) criteria in this order.

1. If there are many types of bread in front of him, he should make the bracha on the bread containing the grain that is considered primary according to the following hierarchy: wheat, barley, spelt, rye, oat.⁴⁸
2. If the breads are of the same grain, then preference is given to the complete loaf (as opposed to sliced, broken, or ripped bread).⁵
3. If all the above are the same, then the better quality bread has precedence.⁵
4. If all the above are the same, then the larger bread has precedence.⁵
5. If all the above are the same, then the preferred bread has precedence.⁵

Shivas Haminim

1. If the foods in front of him are all shivas haminim, then the precedence is as follows: olives, dates, grapes, figs, pomegranates.⁴⁹
2. When any of the five grains are cooked into Mezonos dishes, they take precedence over the shivas haminim because Mezonos precedes Ha'etz. Conversely, if any of the five grains are eaten raw, the bracha is Ha'adama and the shivas haminim take precedence.⁵⁰

Preferred Food

1. If the foods of the same bracha do not fit into any of the aforementioned categories and none of them are complete, then the bracha is made on the preferred food.⁵¹
2. If one food is *usually* more preferred but the other is *presently* more preferred, then the bracha should be recited on the food that is *usually* more preferred.⁵²
3. If one likes both equally, then the one that is *presently* preferred takes precedence.⁵³
4. If foods are eaten out of order of precedence either because of health reasons, or because of the order of a meal (soup coming before the main dish, for example), or to relieve safek berachos, then one may recite the berachos in the order that the food is eaten.⁵⁴

After the Fact

1. If one inadvertently recited the bracha on a food that did not have preference, the bracha is still valid. The bracha will also work to cover the preferred foods with the same bracha as long as he had the other foods in mind while reciting the bracha.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ Vesein Bracha (Halachos of Brochos by Rabbi Bodner, chapter 11, pg 172-173)

⁴⁹ S"A 211:4 says that the order of the shivas haminim is according to the proximity each food has to the word "Eretz" in Devarim 8:8. The order is judged by proximity (reading the pasuk in the forward direction) to either word Eretz, and the first Eretz has precedence.

⁵⁰ M.B 211:25 concludes that barley (when cooked into a dish) precedes olives since Mezonos always precedes Ha'etz. Additionally, S"A 211:5 writes that wheat and barley only take precedence when they are cooked into a Mezonos dish, as opposed to when they are eaten raw and require Ha'adama. M.B 211:27 rules that if one eats wheat or other grains raw, since they are Ha'adama they come after the other shivas haminim which are Ha'etz, unless the raw grain is one's personal preference (like one would do for any foods that are Ha'adama and Ha'etz).

⁵¹ See footnote 5

⁵² M.B 211:10

⁵³ M.B 211:35

⁵⁴ Vezos Habracha page 126

⁵⁵ Rama 211:5. M.B 211:32 emphasizes that one needs explicit intent to cover the other food as opposed to when one made the bracha on the correct food. M.B 211:32 mentions that, according to some acharonim, if one was still eating the 'not halachically preferred' food, no new bracha is needed for the 'halachically preferred' food.

Shinui Makom - David Silber

A. General Rules of Shinui Makom (Changing Locations)

1. If one moves from one place to another in the middle of eating, he is required to make a new bracha regardless of whether he goes back to the original location.⁵⁶
 - a. This halacha only applies when the change is defined halachically as a shinui makom.
 - b. This halacha only applies when one is eating a food which is affected by a shinui makom.

B. Which Change of Place is Considered a Shinui?

1. Within one room, regardless of its size, there is no concern of shinui makom, regardless of whether one can see the area in which he or she started eating.⁵⁷ This includes a large courtyard that is surround by walls.
2. When moving from one room to another within the same house/building, there is a machlokes amongst the poskim as to whether this can be done li'chatchila, but everyone agrees that one does not recite a new brachah when continuing to eat (whether in the new room or in the original room one began eating).⁵⁸
 - a. Additionally, rooms that are common to enter during a meal, such as the kitchen or the bathroom, are certainly not problematic to enter during a meal, and would not constitute a shinui makom.
3. When exiting a house, even if one only goes through the opening of the door and comes back in, this is considered a shinui makom.⁵⁹
4. Most modern day poskim agree that two apartments within the same building classify as two separate "houses," and therefore this would be considered a shinui makom.⁶⁰
 - a. Regarding stairwells in apartment buildings, this topic is a machlokes amongst the poskim, and therefore the best option would be to not enter the stairwell during a meal. If one does, exiting the building entirely would necessitate a new brachah.⁶¹
5. Closed balconies are considered another room within a house, and open balconies are a machlokes amongst the poskim.⁶²
6. If one begins eating on the street, and continues eating when entering a car, it has the same laws as moving from one room to another.⁶³
 - a. However, leaving any enclosed area to a public space is considered a shinui makom.

⁵⁶ "Shinuy Makom and Brachos," Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz. Pesachim 101a discusses the concept of making a new bracha when changing places while eating or drinking. The gemara also discusses the halachic change of places during a meal and the exceptions. The basic halachic concerns are a) whether one may change places li'chatchila and b) whether or not a brachah acharonah should be made on the previous eating and a new brachah rishonah on the continuation in the new place.

⁵⁷ M.B 178 (Introduction)

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ S.A 178:1

⁶⁰ Ve'zos Ha'beracha p.57

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

7. Regarding having entered a new house, yet still being able to see the first house one ate in, it is a machlokes ha'poskim as to whether or not this is considered a shinui makom, so one should avoid doing so.⁶⁴
 - a. If however, a public domain separates the two houses, or while traveling from one house to the next, something obstructed his or her view of the first house, then all agree that it is considered a shinui makom.⁶⁵
8. The status of a Succah depends upon its relationship with the house:
 - a. If it is directly connected to the house, then it has the same rules as moving from one room to another.
 - b. If however, it is considered detached from the house, then it is like moving from one house to another.⁶⁶

C. Regarding Switching Locations

1. Having intent to move from one house to another does not change anything, as this still is considered a shinui makom.⁶⁷ However...
 - a. If one is eating on the go or will be switching locations soon after reciting the beracha and had intent when making the brachah rishonah to continue the meal wherever he goes, then shinui makom does not apply, even if he cannot see the place where he began eating.⁶⁸
 - b. If one continuously eats he need not recite a new beracha even if he did not have in mind that he would be switching places (i.e. eating a sucking candy)⁶⁹
 - c. Areas that are considered normal to visit during the meal, such as the kitchen or the bathroom, are allowed to be entered li'chatchila, even according to those mentioned above who say that one should not move from room to room li'chatchila.⁷⁰
 - d. If one is eating together with a group of people and at least one member of the group is still present in the original location when he returns, he need not make a new beracha rishona upon returning to eat.⁷¹

D. Which Foods are Effected by a Shinui Makom?

1. Foods which require a bracha achrona in the place in which they were eaten (i.e. bread, and possibly mezonot foods, along with the other shivat ha'minim)⁷² are not affected by the normal laws of shinui makom. All other foods are affected by the above rules. Therefore...

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid. p.58-59

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 58

⁶⁸ M.B 178:42

⁶⁹ Sh't Igrot Moshe 2:57, Vezot Ha'Bracha pg 62

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ M.B 178:27

⁷² S.A 678:5 quotes the Rambam and the Rashbam that all shivat haminim (including Ha'motzi and Mezonot foods) require a bracha achrona in their place. However, the S.A also cites the Rosh that only grain products (both Ha'motzi and Mezonot) require a bracha achrona in their place. The Rama however holds that only bread requires a bracha achrona in its place. The M.B 178:5 quotes achronim who write that one should be stringent even regarding the shivat haminim to return to one's place to bench on these foods. However, the M.B also quotes the Gra who holds that only for grain products must one return to his original place.

- a. If one ate bread at home and then left and continued to eat (either elsewhere or at home upon returning) he need not recite another beracha when he continues to eat.⁷³
 - b. If one was eating a fruit or a vegetable and then switched locations he will require a new beracha rishona when he continues to eat (either elsewhere or upon returning).⁷⁴
2. Even regarding foods not affected by the normal rules of shinui makom (i.e bread), li'chatchila one should not leave the place in which he began his meal to continue eating somewhere else, unless he originally intended this when he recited Ha'motzi. If one did not have this in mind, he should preferably recite Birkat Hamazon before leaving. Nonetheless, if he already left he may continue eating in the second place without reciting a beracha.⁷⁵

Shiur of Kezayis - Zak Shayne

A. Kezayis in Volume

1. The size of a kezayis according to the Shulchan Aruch⁷⁶ is half of an egg. According to the Rambam⁷⁷ it is one third of an egg. The Chazon Ish⁷⁸ decided that we could be lenient like the Rambam, whereas the Mishnah Brurah⁷⁹ holds like the Shulchan Aruch.
2. The size in volume of a kezayis according to the Chazon Ish⁸⁰: according to the Rambam's size (a third of an egg) is 33.3 cubic centimeters. According to the Shulchan Aruch's size (half an egg) is 50 cubic centimeters.
3. The size in volume of a kezayis according to Rav Chaim Naeh⁸¹: according to the Rambam's size (a third of an egg) is 19.2 cubic centimeters. According to the Shulchan Aruch's size (half an egg) is 28.8 cubic centimeters.
4. The size in volume of a kezayis according to Rav Mordechai Willig⁸² is 22.5 cubic centimeters.
5. One needs to make sure that he does not count air in the food as part of the shiur of kezayis. If one has a food that is hollow, a kezayis of that food is considered when the food would be pressed.⁸³

B. Bracha Rishona

1. A bracha rishona is made on any sized food item, even if it is smaller than a kezayis.⁸⁴

C. Bracha Acharona

1. A bracha acharona is only said if a kezayis or more was eaten.⁸⁵

⁷³ Rama 178:2

⁷⁴ M.B 178:42

⁷⁵ M.B 178:33

⁷⁶ S.A 486:1

⁷⁷ Mishnah Torah Eiruvim 1:9

⁷⁸ Sefer Chazon Ish 39:17

⁷⁹ 486:1

⁸⁰ Rav Chaim Kanievsky in Shiurin Shel Torah (p. 66) quotes the Chazon Ish that a Kezayit is 2/3 of a modern egg and an egg can possibly be up to 55cc. Therefore, Vezot HaBracha (Birur Halacha 1) writes that the Chazon Ish holds that 33.3cc is a Kezayit.

⁸¹ Shiurei Torah, Shaar 3

⁸² Pesach To-Go, Nisan 5771, p. 60

⁸³ Rama 486:1

⁸⁴ S.A 210:1

2. If one is not sure if he has eaten a kezayis or not he should not say a bracha acharona because of the principle of safek brachos lehakel.
3. Therefore the Mishnah Brurah⁸⁶ writes that a person should be careful not to put himself in a situation of doubt and make sure he has eaten either half an egg, or much less than a third of an egg. Because there is a dispute on the size of an egg within the dispute on how much of the egg is equal to a kezayis, it is ideal for one to eat less than 19.2 cubic centimeters or more than 50 cubic centimeters.

Making One Hundred Brachot Daily - Noam Itzhak

1. One should recite 100 brachot daily. Numerous reasons are given for this practice.⁸⁷ Some hold that this is a biblical mitzvah, but most poskim hold that it's derabanan.⁸⁸
2. Most poskim assume that the count of the 100 brachot begins at night and continues until the end of the following day.⁸⁹
3. On Shabbat and Yom Tov, when we do not recite 19 brachot in Shemoneh Esrei, one should be careful to make extra brachot on food or besamim.⁹⁰ However, if one is unable

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ M.B 486:1

⁸⁷ Devarim 10:12 asks “Mah Hashem elokecha shoel me’imach?” “What does Hashem your G-d demand from you?” In a non-literal read of the passuk, Menachot 43b states “al tikre mah ela meah,” meaning one should read the passuk as “100 Hashem your G-d demands from you”—a reference to the 100 blessings one must recite daily. This is codified in S”A 46:3. Tosfot s”v shoel writes that the hint from this pasuk is that there are 100 letters in the pasuk. Tosfot adds that the atbash numerical value of mah is equal to 100. Additionally, Daat Zekenim MeBaalei Tosfot (Devarim 10:12) Bamidbar Rabba Parasha 18, and Tur 46 quoting Rabbi Natronai Gaon write that Dovid hamelech made this gezeirah because there was a plague that was killing 100 people daily. However, once David instituted the practice to recite 100 blessings daily the plague stopped.

⁸⁸ See Sh”t Ateret Paz 1:1. The Chida (Machzik Bracha 290:1) writes that going out of the way to complete a hundred brachot daily is only a virtuous practice. However, the Kitzur S”A 6:7, Petach Dvir 290:3, Sdei Chemed (Chet 34), and Sh”t Ateret Paz 1:1 write that this is a complete obligation. Chazon Ovadyah (Shabbat vol 2 pg 339) writes that even the Chida may mean that it’s only virtuous to go out of the way to make the Bracha oneself, however accumulating one hundred brachot (including brachot to which one only listens, such as the Brachot on the Torah reading) is an obligation. Tur 46 also states that this obligation is rabbinic and the pasuk brought in Menachot 43b is an asmachta. The Arizal in Shaar Ruach Hakodesh 4a says that there is a level of blessing in heaven that the only way to reach is through reciting 100 berachot each day.

⁸⁹ Sh”t Ateret Paz 1:1 writes that it seems from most rishonim that we count from the day through the night. However, he writes that it seems from the Beit Yosef (46 s.v. “Ditanya”) and the M.B (46:14) that we count from the night through the day based on the fact that the rishonim begin their count of the brachot from HaMapil. Additionally, Sh”t Betzel Chachmah 4:155 proved from the poskim counting of the brachot on Shabbat that we count from the nighttime. Sefer Ha’itim 195 says that the count starts from the morning and finishes the next morning. If one brought Shabbat in early, Rabbi Shimon Sofer in Hitorerut Teshuva 3:502 says that the berachot count for the count of Shabbat, while Sh”t Bitzel Hachochma 4:155 says they count for the previous day. According to Rav Stern in Bitzel Hachochma, one would need to make up all berachot recited once one began Shabbat, but before sunset, including the seven of Shemoneh Esrei and four of Kriat Shema, along with any other brachot he said before sunset. Rav Mordechai Eliyahu (quoted in Mikraei Kodosh Hilchot Yom Kippur 12:5:note 58) holds that one only has the hours of daylight to reach 100 brachot, from the simple meaning of the word “yom.”

⁹⁰ One is typically missing about 13 brachot on Shabbat (M.B 46:14).

to personally recite one hundred brachot on Shabbat or Yom Tov, one can listen to the brachot on the Torah reading with intent that these brachot should count as if he personally recited them.⁹¹

4. Some say that one cannot recite a bracha sheina tzreecha to reach the 100 brachot, while others argue that it is permissible.⁹²
5. Some say that women are not obligated to perform this mitzvah because it is time-bound,⁹³ while other poskim say they too are obligated.⁹⁴

Amen – Dubbin Hanon

1. If a person hears a bracha made properly by a Jew, he is obligated to answer amen. This obligation is based on the pasuk of גדל לאלקינוכי שם ה אקרא הו .⁹⁵ Nonetheless, one who is in the middle of learning does not need to answer amen to a bracha or to kaddish.⁹⁶
2. The letters of amen are the root letters of the word Emunah, belief or trust. When responding amen, if one is responding amen to:
 - a. a Blessing of Praise one should think: "I believe in the bracha that I heard and I affirm its truth."
 - b. a Blessing of Prayer one should think: "I believe that Hashem is 'x' (i.e. the Giver of Wisdom) and I pray that this matter should be fulfilled (i.e. He should grant us knowledge)."
 - c. Kaddish one should believe in the words of his request that Hashem will reveal His kingship speedily and soon in our days.⁹⁷

⁹¹ The Magen Avraham 46:8 writes that one should only rely on accumulating one hundred Brachot using brachot that one heard from the brachot on Torah reading if one is unable to make the brachot oneself by eating snacks. This is also the opinion of the S"A HaRav 46, and M.B 46:14. See Sh"t Yabia Omer 8:23:24.

⁹² Yalkut Yosef (Pesukei Dezimrah p. 53) says that if fruits were brought to the table before Birkat Hamazon one is allowed to push off making the bracha until after Birkat Hamazon to reach 100 brachot. Sh"t Mishneh Halachot 15:60 also rules that this is not considered bracha sheayna tzricha since you are creating the obligation to recite it in order to fulfill the mitzva of reciting 100 berachot. Magen Avraham 215:6 holds that you can only wait to eat the fruit for dessert if they have not been brought to the table yet.

⁹³ Halichot Bayta 13:note 2 in name of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Sh"t Teshuvot VeHanagot 2:129, Sh"t Shevet HaKehati 3:63, Birkat Eitan (pg 62), Vezot HaBracha (pg 185, chapter 20), Sh"t Ateret Paz 1:1, Shevet HaLevi 5:23, and Sh"t Rivevot Efraim 3:47, 5:114 write that a woman is exempt and some base it on the Magen Avraham regarding Zecher Yetziat Mitzrayim in Shema who disagrees with the Shagat Aryeh.

⁹⁴ Rav Elyashiv in Yashiv Moshe (pg 19) and Birkat Eitan (pg 61), Rav Herschel Schachter in "Women at Prayer" at yutorah.org, Chacham Ovadyah in Halichot Olam (vol 1 pg 59), Halacha Berura 46:8, Yalkut Yosef (Otzar Dinim LeIsha pg 75), and Halichot Bat Yisrael (end of chapter 14) write that a woman is obligated since it's a obligation that applies the whole day and is renewed every day (similar argument to the Shagat Aryeh regarding Zecher Yetziat Mitzrayim in Shema). Contemporary Questions In Halacha and Hashkafa pg. quotes opinions on both sides as well.

⁹⁵ S"A 215:2 based on the Gemara Yoma 37a, Rambam Hilchot Berachot 1:13, M"B 215:8, Kaf Hachayim 124:30. Chazal attributed much praise to one who answers amen. For example, Berachot 53b states that the one who answers amen is greater than the one who recites the bracha.

⁹⁶ Halichot Shlomo Tefilla 9:6 writes that one need not answer to a bracha or a kaddish, but he should respond to Kedusha and Modim together with the tzibbur if he is in the same room so that he does not appear to break off from the tzibbur.

⁹⁷ M"B 124:25

3. One should slightly elongate the word amen for the amount of time it takes to recite the words for which amen stands: “e-l melech ne’eman.”⁹⁸
4. One may answer amen to a bracha recited by a Jew even if he does not hear the whole text.⁹⁹ If he knows which bracha was recited, he can answer amen even if he did not hear any part of the bracha.¹⁰⁰
5. One should avoid answering amen too early. Additionally, one should make sure to enunciate the word clearly, and avoid swallowing the alef,¹⁰¹ or the nun.¹⁰²
6. If one is obligated in a certain bracha and someone is reciting the bracha on his behalf, if he does not hear its recitation he should not answer amen as this is considered an amen yetomah. Alternatively, an amen yetomah is when one waits before responding. Therefore, when one hears a bracha, he should respond immediately.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ S”A 124:8, M”B 124:36

⁹⁹ The Mishnah Berachot 51b states that although regarding a non-Jew one can only answer Amen if he hears the entire bracha, one can answer Amen to a partial bracha from a Jew. This is codified as halachah in S”A 215:2. Tur 215, Rosh Berachot 8:5 and Talmidei Rabbenu Yonah explain that one can respond amen to a Jew’s bracha as long as one heard everything from Hashem’s name onwards (i.e. the entire blessing except for the words “baruch atah”. Rashi and Or Zarua, however, hold that one can respond amen as long as one heard the very end of the blessing (i.e. “borei minei Mezonot”). M”B 215:6 records both opinions.

¹⁰⁰ M”B 215:6, Yalkut Yosef Tefilla (v. 2, p. 163)

¹⁰¹ Berachot 47a warns against answering an amen chatufa, “a snatched amen.” Rashi s.v. “chatufa” explains that this refers to one who hurries the vowelization of the first letter, not enunciating the kamatz under the alef and instead pronouncing a chataf. The Aruch (Erech Amen) explains that chatufa refers to one who answers amen before the bracha is finished. Both of these definitions are quoted in S”A. 124:8 as well as Kitzur S”A 6:10.

¹⁰² Berachot 47a also warns against answering an “amen ketufa,” “a cut-off amen.” Rashi explains that one “curtails” the amen by omitting the nun. Alternatively, the Aruch (Erech “Amen”) explains that “amen ketufa” refers to one who pauses in between the two syllables, dividing amen into two words. Again, the S”A and Rama 124:8 cite both opinions.

¹⁰³ Berachot 47a warns against answering an amen yetoma. Rashi (s.v. Yetoma) and Tosfot (s.v. Amen yetoma) explain that the respondent has not heard the actual bracha, but joins the congregation and responds amen. This does not contradict the practice of the large synagogue in Alexandria (Sukkah 51b) where flags were waved at the appropriate spots to indicate that amen should be recited. In that case, those answering knew they were responding to a brachah and to which one they were responding, even though they could not hear the actual voice of the chazan.

Alternatively, Tosfot Sukkah 52a bring the approach of of Rabbeinu Nissim Gaon that this is only a problem if one wants to fulfill his obligation by hearing the bracha. In Alexandria they could respond because they had already fulfilled their obligation. This is the approach of Rabbeinu Yonah 34b s.v. “Ein Onin” and Rambam Berachot 1:14 as well. See Rav Daniel Feldman (“An Orphaned Amen” on Yutorah) who quotes Rav Soloveitchik’s (Reshimat Shiurim to Sh’vuot 36b, p 116) explanation of this machloket. S”A 124:8 holds like Rabbenu Yonah, while the Rama writes that some are strict (in accordance with Rashi and Tosfot in Berachot) that even if one is not obligated in a bracha, he should not respond unless he knows which bracha was recited. Biur Halacha s.v. “yesh machmirin” says that although many acharonim disagree with the Rama, it is better to remain passive because of the severity of an amen yetomah. While the Ben Ish Chai Teruma 13 only mentions the opinion of the S”A, Yalkut Yosef (Tefilla v. 2, p. 163) writes that one should be concerned for that opinion of the Rama and not respond to a bracha if he does not know which one is being said. Kaf Hachaim 124:47 agrees. Interestingly, Rav Moshe Feinstein (Iggerot Moshe YD 4:61:16) writes one needs to know which part of Kaddish he is answering.

Accidentally Eating Without a Bracha - Dubbin Hanon

1. If one already swallowed his food he should recite a bracha if he is going to continue to eat.¹⁰⁴
2. If someone ate food without reciting the bracha beforehand, but realized before swallowing, the proper procedure will depend on which type of food he put in his mouth. If it is a food that will become disgusting if spit out, he should put it to the side of his mouth and recite a bracha. If it will not be disgusting to spit it out, he should spit it out and recite a bracha before putting it back into his mouth.¹⁰⁵
3. If one drank a liquid, but forgot to make a bracha and remembered before swallowing it he may swallow the liquid and not recite a bracha rishona on what he already drank,¹⁰⁶ while others advise spitting it out if not in a pressing situation.¹⁰⁷

A third explanation of amen yetomah is brought by the Avudarham (quoted in Beit Yosef 124). He says that saying an amen yetomah means responding amen long after the bracha was recited. The Rama 124:8 cites this interpretation. M”B 124:34 explains that this means that one should respond within Toch Kedi Dibbur. Vezot HaBracha (pg 189) agrees.

¹⁰⁴ Berachot 51a compares one who eats without a bracha to one who ate garlic, causing him to give off an offensive odor. Should he eat more garlic and increase the odor? One who transgressed by eating without a bracha certainly should not transgress more! This is brought down as the halacha in Rambam 4:2, Tur S”A. 167:8 and Vezot Habracha pg. 88. He should not recite a bracha if he is not going to continue eating. Berachot 51a quotes the opinion of Ravina that even if you are finished eating you can recite a bracha. He brings a proof from the fact that a convert or baal keri (machloket Rashi and Tosfot there) can say a bracha on his tevila in the mikveh after the tevila. The gemara rejects his opinion and distinguishes between the two because the convert or baal keri could not have said the bracha before but the person who took a drink could have. Rashba Berachot 50b s.v. “vihatanya” quotes the Raavad who paskins like Ravina that even if one finished eating he may recite a bracha (see Maamar Mordechai 172:2 who writes that the Rashba’s version of the Raavad contradicts the Raavad’s own note on Rambam Berachot 8:12). However, Shaar Hatziyun 172:5 writes that this opinion of the Raavad is a daat yachid which we do not accept. Therefore, S”A. 167:8 rules that if he is not going to continue eating he should not recite a bracha. Yalkut Yosef Berachot pg. 118 and Aruch Hashulchan 167:18 agree. In such a situation, if possible, one should say a bracha and eat a little more. Magen Avraham 167:21 writes that, if possible, one should say a bracha and eat a little more in order to satisfy the opinion of the Raavad quoted in the Rashba. M.B 167:49, Aruch Hashulchan 167:18, and Yalkut Yosef Berachot pg. 118 agree. Rabbi Meir Mazuz (Ish Matzliach 167: footnote 7) says based on the Beit Yosef that this is not necessary. Shaar Hatziyun 167:45 adds that if done immediately this could help retroactively to correct having eaten without a bracha. Therefore, Or Litzion 2:46:12 and Vezot Habracha pg. 88 say that in a situation where you are saying a bracha on what you are going to eat, you should have in mind to cover what you ate already.

¹⁰⁵ Berachot 50b quotes three beraitot regarding what do in a situation when one ate before reciting a bracha. These beraitot appear to contradict each other. One says to swallow, one says to spit out, and the third says to put the food to the side of one’s mouth. The gemara explains that one should swallow if it is a drink, you should spit the food out if it won’t be disgusting to eat it after that, and you should put it to the side if it will be disgusting to spit out. This is quoted as halacha in Rambam Berachot 8:12 and S”A. 172:1-2., Vezot Habracha pg. 88, Chazon Ovadia pg. 68. M”B 172:7 explains that the reason that one must spit out foods that will not be disgusting is because the gemara teaches based on a pasuk in Tehillim that when reciting a bracha one’s mouth must be void of any object or food, so that it is “filled” only with God’s praise.

¹⁰⁶ The Rosh (Brachot 7:33) quotes the Raavad who explains that when the gemara says one should “swallow the water,” it means that he should swallow the water and then say a bracha rishona. He explains that since he remembered before he swallowed, he can swallow and then say a bracha. This situation is different than remembering that one did not say a bracha until after he has completely finished eating

4. Even if one omitted the bracha rishona, he should still recite a bracha achrona if he ate or drank a sufficient amount.¹⁰⁸

Kavana During Brachot – Jeremy Perlow

1. When reciting brachot a person must think about the meaning of the words one is reciting.¹⁰⁹ A blessing should not be thrown from one's mouth and one should make blessings peacefully and calmly. One should think about Hashem's kindness in having provided us with the food or Mitzva which we are about to perform. One who recites blessings out of mere habit arouses Hashem's anger against His people.¹¹⁰
2. Additionally, when reciting Hashem's four letter name "A-donai," one should think about the fact that Hashem is master over the entire world and that Hashem exists throughout time.¹¹¹ These two intentions are easy to think about because they correspond to the way Hashem's name is pronounced ("Adon" means "Master" the yud suffix implies "my," thus the meaning of this word's pronunciation is "My Master") and the way Hashem's name is written (with the letters of the words "haya"--"He was," "hove"--"He is," and "yihye"--"He will be").
3. Although one should think about how Hashem's name was pronounced in the Temple (as it is spelled), one is forbidden to pronounce Hashem's name this way and one who does so loses his portion in the world to come.¹¹²
4. When reciting the name "E-lohim" one should think about the fact that Hashem is strong, all-capable, and all-powerful.¹¹³
5. When reciting Hashem's name not in the context of a bracha or the first pasuk of the shema, it is not necessary to have these kavanot.¹¹⁴

because in this case he remembered while the water was still in his mouth. He notes, however, that if one has more water, he should spit out the water, say a bracha, and drink the water that he has. According to some, this is the opinion of the Rambam in Berachot 8:12 as well. However, see Chazon Ovadia Berachot pg. 69 who proves otherwise. Biur Halacha 172:1 s.v. "Viayno" writes that ideally one should be strict for the Raavad to spit out the water if he has more. Vezot Habracha pg. 88 agrees. Although Rama 172:1 follows the Rosh, the S"A 172:1, M"B 172:5, and Eliya Rabba 172:1 say one should not recite a bracha rishona if he is not going to drink more (see a list of other poskim who hold this way in the Shaar Hatziyun 672:5). However, some acharonim suggest that if one is going to swallow the water, he should think the bracha in his mind while the liquid is still in his mouth before he swallows, This suggestion is mentioned by the Pri Megadim MZ 172:2 and is accepted by Chazon Ovadia Berachot pg. 70-71, Ben Ish Chai Matot 14, Kaf Hachayim 172:1, and Ketzot Hashulchan 55:9.

¹⁰⁷ M"B 172:2

¹⁰⁸ M"B 171:3

¹⁰⁹ S"A. 5:1

¹¹⁰ M"B 5:1

¹¹¹ S"A 5:1 The Gra however, as quoted in M"B 5:3, holds that one need not think about Hashem's existence throughout time when reciting Hashem's name because one need only concern himself with the pronunciation of the word he is reading, not the way it is written. However, even the S"A agrees that one need not think about Hashem's existence throughout time when Hashem's name is spelled "A-donai" (M.B 5:3).

¹¹² M.B 5:2

¹¹³ S"A 5:1

¹¹⁴ Or Litzion 2:1:18

6. One should not be doing anything else while reciting a bracha or a prayer even if he feels it will not interfere with his kavana.¹¹⁵

Where Can One Recite Brachos? - Ben Kean

1. Because of the verse in the Torah קְדוּשׁ וְלֹא יִרְאָה בְּךָ עֲרוֹת דְּבַר וְשֶׁב מֵאַחֲרֵי הַיְהוּדָה מִחֲנִיךְ ¹¹⁶ it is prohibited to think or recite *devarim sheb'kedusha* (all forms of prayer, blessings, and all Torah texts) under certain conditions.¹¹⁷
2. It is forbidden to think or recite *devarim sheb'kedusha* in a place that has uncovered urine, human feces, or any substance that stinks.¹¹⁸ Some examples are a bathroom or a room in which a baby's diaper is being changed.
3. If urine was absorbed into the ground or clothing and dried, then one may think or recite *devarim sheb'kedusha*. If the urine is still moist, one may not think or speak *devarim sheb'kedusha* next to it, unless it was diluted with a *reviyit* of water.¹¹⁹
4. If there is feces on one's body, it is forbidden to think or recite *devarim sheb'kedusha*, even if it is covered.¹²⁰
5. If an area of one *tefach* of a part of a woman's body that is usually covered is exposed, it is considered nudity, and it is therefore prohibited to think or recite *devarim sheb'kedusha*.¹²¹ The portions of the body that do not need to be covered are the neck above the collarbone, the face, the lower arms below the elbow, and the lower legs below the knees.¹²² While most parts of the body are not considered nudity in an area less than a *tefach*,¹²³ any area on the thighs is considered nudity.¹²⁴
6. A *tefach* of hair of a woman who has been married (regardless of current marital status) is considered nudity, in sight of which many poskim forbid one to think or recite *devarim sheb'kedusha*.¹²⁵

¹¹⁵ Halacha Berura 5:2

¹¹⁶ Devarim 23:15

¹¹⁷ Gemara Berachot 25b. see article by Rabbi Yehuda Henkin in Tradition for a lengthier discussion

¹¹⁸ S"A 85:2, Kitzur S"A 5:2

¹¹⁹ Kitzur S"A 5:2

¹²⁰ Kitzur S"A 5:3

¹²¹ S"A 75:1 based on Gemara Berachot 24b.

¹²² M"B 75:2, Halichos Bas Yisrael 4:4

¹²³ Rama 75:1, unlike the Chayei Adam 4:2 who writes that even less than a *tefach* of a woman other than one's own wife would be nakedness.

¹²⁴ Berachot 24a writes based on a *pauk* in Yeshayahu that the "shok" of a woman is considered nakedness. Mishna Berura 75:2 and Rav Moshe Feinstein Even Ha'ezer 7:100:6 write that this is referring to the thigh and not the lower leg. However, Chazon Ish 16:8 quotes the Bach that this includes the lower leg and does not seem to decide definitively himself. Rav Vosner in Shevet Halevi O.C 1 is strict.

¹²⁵ Gemara Berachot 24a cites a *pasuk* in Shir Hashirim which shows the a woman's hair is considered nakedness. Rav Moshe Feinstein in Iggerot Moshe OC 1:42 points out that this is separate from the obligation of a woman to cover her hair. S"A 75:2 writes that this refers to a woman who is married. Mishna Brura 75:10 and the Chazon Ish (16:6), insist that despite the custom of women not to cover their hair, a man may not recite the Keriyat Shema in the presence of a married woman's hair. Interestingly, Aruch Hashulchan 75:7 writes that nowadays, since most women walk with their hair uncovered, one would be allowed to recite a bracha in such a situation. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Iggerot Moshe OC 1:42), Ben Ish Chai Parashat Bo 12 and Chacham Ovadia Yosef (Yabia Omer OC 6:13), rule in accordance with the Aruch Hashulchan.

- Regarding one who must pray, recite berachot, or learn Torah, and there is a woman facing him who is revealing a tefach of areas that are normally covered, l'chatchilah, he should turn away so that he cannot see her. If he cannot turn away, he must look into his siddur, or close his eyes, and only then say the matters of sanctity.¹²⁶

Brachot Through a Microphone - Mordechai Djavaheri

Rav Moshe Feinstein held that one fulfills his obligation of a bracha or another mitzvah by listening through a microphone, though he was hesitant to permit this. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach and others, however, held that one does not fulfill his obligation for a bracha or any mitzvah via a microphone.¹²⁷



Bracha on Foods in a Meal - Yaakov Abramovitz

- Meat, fish, eggs, vegetables, cheese, pasta, and other filling foods that are eaten for satiation during the course of a bread meal do not require a *bracha rishona* or *acharona*.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ S”A 75:6, Chacham Ovadia Yosef in Yabea Omer OC 3:7:10

¹²⁷ The mishna (Rosh Hashana 27b) states that if someone blows a shofar into a pit, one who only hears the echo of the blow does not fulfill his obligation. One could argue that listening to a voice through a microphone is similar to an echo and does not fulfill one’s obligation. Yet, Rav Levi Yitzchak Halperin (Torah UMadah 9:1, 5740, p. 3) points out that there is a clear distinction between an echo and a microphone: an echo causes a mixture of sounds, whereas the microphone simply amplifies the original sound.

The main discussion of the poskim, however, centers around whether the sound that is produced by the microphone is considered the original sound that entered into it. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igrot Moshe 2:108 and 4:91:4) writes that it seems that one could fulfill any mitzvah which one fulfills through speech by hearing it amplified by a microphone. He notes, though, that this leniency would not apply to Kriat Shema or Birkat Hamazon. He reasons that since the voice is heard as a direct and immediate result of the speaker, it is considered like regular speech and not an echo. Even though the microphone converts the sound waves into an electrical signal which is then used to produce amplified sound waves, the resulting sound waves should be considered no different than regular sound waves that are created as a person speaks. He concludes by permitting the use of microphones with hesitation, being that the microphone is a new invention and should not be introduced into Jewish practices.

Interestingly, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach records a conversation he had with the Chazon Ish, in which the Chazon Ish espoused an opinion very similar to Rav Moshe. On the other hand, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Minchat Shlomo 1:9, Kovetz Mamarim BeInyanei Chashmal 5738 p. 40) felt that since the microphone converts the sound waves into an electrical signal and produces a new sound, one certainly can not fulfill mitzvot through a microphone since the sound produced is not the same as the original sound. Rav Ovadia Yosef (Yachave Daat 3:54 and Yabia Omer 1:19:18, cited in Chazon Ovadia on Purim pg. 44-47 and Shabbat vol. 5 pg 241-244) agreed with Rav Shlomo Zalman with regards to Zimmun, Megillah, and Shofar. See Rav Yosef Engel in Gilyonei HaShas (Brachot 25b) who presents a similar approach. He says that hearing sound through a microphone is considered an unnatural way for sound to be transferred.

¹²⁸ Berachos 41b rules that foods that come during a meal and because of the meal do not require a bracha rishona or acharona. Tosfos (s.v. hilchasa) includes in this category meat, fish, grains and anything normally eaten during a meal for satiation, even if not physically eaten together with bread (see Rashi s.v.

2. Drinks during a meal do not require a *bracha rishona* or *acharona*¹²⁹, except for wine and grape juice, which require a *bracha rishona* of *hagafen*.¹³⁰ However, on Shabbos and Yom Tov one does not make *hagafen* on wine during the meal, since it is covered by the *bracha* on wine recited during *kiddush*¹³¹ even for those who were *yotzei kiddush* by listening as long as they drank some wine at *kiddush*.¹³²
3. Whiskey or fruits (e.g. grapefruit)¹³³ eaten during a meal to whet one's appetite do not require a *bracha* as they are a part of the meal.¹³⁴
4. There is a dispute regarding whether sweet fruits eaten as appetizers (e.g. melon or fruit cocktail), not eaten to whet one's appetite, require a *bracha rishona* during a meal.¹³⁵ In practice, one should avoid the *machlokes* by exempting the appetizer with a *bracha* on any fruit before *Hamotzi*, or during the meal with a fruit not being eaten as an appetizer.¹³⁶
5. A cooked dish eaten during a meal does not require a *bracha* even if it is filled with fruit since the flour is the *ikar* (e.g. apple kugel, cranberry crisp).¹³⁷
6. Fruits that are cooked with meat (e.g. pineapple chicken, cranberry sauce with turkey) do not require a *bracha* during a meal.¹³⁸
7. Fruit soup or fruit salad (e.g. Waldorf salad) eaten as a course in meal (e.g. in place of regular soup or salad), do not require a *bracha*.¹³⁹
8. When one recites *Hamotzi* on croutons (made from pieces of bread) in a soup or salad¹⁴⁰ he still must make a *bracha rishona* on the soup/salad as well.¹⁴¹

devarim who interprets the Gemara differently). S.A 177:1 paskens like Tosfos. M.B 177:2 explains that such foods do not require a *bracha* because they become *tafel* to the bread even when not eaten with the bread since they are staples of the bread meal.

¹²⁹ S.A 174:7. Drinks are covered by *Hamotzi* at the beginning of the meal since it is normal to drink during the meal.

¹³⁰ Berachos 41b-42a concludes that one must make a *bracha rishona* on wine during a meal because it "has its own *bracha*." Rashi (42a s.v. d'goreim) explains that there are some mitzvos that require one to drink wine even when he is not thirsty (e.g. *Kiddush*, *Havdalah*, *Birchas Ayrusin*, etc.). Alternatively, Tosfos explains that one recites *Hagafen* exclusively on wine, whereas *Shehakol* is recited for all other drinks. However, according to either explanation, wine requires a *bracha* during a meal because it is significant and not *tafel* to the bread (M.B 174:1).

¹³¹ S.A 174:4 based on Berachos 42b. M.B 174:8 notes that in our countries it is uncommon to have wine during the meal, and therefore one must have specific intention during *Kiddush* to exempt the wine he will drink during the meal. *VeZos HaBracha* (chapter 8, note 9) rules that in a home where wine is regularly served during the meal, one need not have specific intention during *Kiddush* to cover the wine he will drink during the meal.

¹³² *VeZos HaBracha* p. 72

¹³³ *V'sayn Bracha* p. 93

¹³⁴ *Mishnah Brurah* 174:39

¹³⁵ *V'sayn Bracha* p. 93, notes 25.1 and 25.2. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach holds that since sweet fruits do not whet one's appetite, they are not considered part of the meal, and therefore require a *bracha*. However, Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv considers them part of the meal since they are eaten as an appetizer, and therefore no *bracha* is required.

¹³⁶ *V'sayn Bracha* p. 94

¹³⁷ M.B 168:43

¹³⁸ M.B 177:5. The fruits are *tafel* to the meat which, in turn, is *tafel* to the bread.

¹³⁹ *VeZos HaBracha* p. 76

¹⁴⁰ Even if there are only a few croutons in a large soup or salad, one must make *Hamotzi* on them since the five grains are not *tafel* when they are the minority (S.A 208:2).

Bracha on Desserts in a Meal - Yaakov Abramovitz

General principle:

1. Any food that is eaten at the end of a *Hamotzi* meal as dessert (*kinuach*) and not to satiate (*l'hasbia*) requires a *bracha rishona*,¹⁴² but not a *bracha acharona*.¹⁴³

Specific Applications:

2. Fruits that are eaten at the end of a meal require a *bracha rishona* (*ha'eitz*) even if they are cooked (e.g. compote).¹⁴⁴
3. Sweets, including candy, chocolate, ice cream and ices,¹⁴⁵ eaten at the end of a meal require one to recite a *Shehakol*.
4. Coffee and tea at the end of a meal do not require a *bracha rishona*.¹⁴⁶
5. Cakes that are certainly *Mezonos*, such as apple pie¹⁴⁷ or Rice Krispie Treats,¹⁴⁸ require a *bracha rishona* at the end of a meal, provided that they are eaten as desserts and not to satiate.¹⁴⁹
6. One should not make a *bracha rishona* on any other cake, cookie, or brownie eaten at the end of a meal.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴¹ Rav Shmuel Vozner quoted in Shaarei Bracha chapter 8, note 6 (and Dirshu Mishnah Brurah 177:3). In this case, the soup or salad cannot be considered tafel to the croutons, since one's main intention is to eat the soup/salad, while the croutons are only used to enhance its taste.

¹⁴² Berachos 41b rules that any food that comes during a meal but not because of the meal requires a *bracha rishona* but not a *bracha acharona*. Tosfos (ibid s.v. hilchasa) interprets this category as fruits or anything not eaten for satiation (see Rashi s.v. shelo who interprets the gemara differently). S.A 177:1 paskens like Tosfos.

¹⁴³ Because dessert is not considered part of the meal, it is not covered by the initial *Hamotzi* and requires its own *bracha rishona*. However, no *bracha acharona* is needed because *birchas hamazon* covers all foods eaten before it (S.A 177:1).

¹⁴⁴ Mishnah Brurah 177:4

¹⁴⁵ *Vezos HaBracha* (chapter 8, note 12) quotes that Rav Moshe Feinstein ruled that ice cream and ices do not require a *bracha rishona* at the end of a meal as they are essentially liquids which do not require a *bracha* during a meal. However, he also quotes that most poskim (Rav Shmuel Vozner, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv) hold that one should make a *bracha* on ice cream and ices at the end of the meal, as even liquids consumed purely as dessert need a *bracha rishona*. He recommends, where possible, to make a *Shehakol* on candy or chocolate, exempting the ice cream or ices and avoiding the *machlokes*.

¹⁴⁶ Mishnah Brurah (174:39) quotes the Chayei Adam who maintains that coffee at the end of a meal requires a *bracha rishona* since it is not consumed to satiate, but rather to digest the previously eaten food. Mishnah Brurah himself is not convinced that coffee requires a *bracha*, and to avoid the *safek*, he advises one to make a *Shehakol* on something else (e.g. candy) to cover the coffee. However, where no candy or chocolate is available, one should not make a *bracha* on the coffee (*Vezos HaBracha* p. 73). Mishnah Brurah adds that on Shabbos and Yom Tov, he is certain that one should not make a *bracha* on coffee (or tea) since all drinks during a meal are covered by the *borei pri hagafen* made on wine during *Kiddush* (even for those who were *yotzei kiddush* by listening).

¹⁴⁷ There are three opinions regarding what makes something *pas habaah b'kisnin* (*Mezonos*) as opposed to *lechem* (*Hamotzi*). Something that is *pas habaah b'kisnin* according to all three opinions (i.e. it is flaky, kneaded with sweet juice, and contains a filling) is definitely *Mezonos* and would require a *beracha* when eaten at the end of the meal (S.A 168:7).

¹⁴⁸ Since they are not made from one of the five grains, they are certainly not *lechem*.

¹⁴⁹ S.A 168:8, M.B 168:41 and *Biur Halacha* s.v. *teunim*.

Netilat Yadayim - Ben Kean

1. The hands should be washed by pouring water from a cup or vessel, rather than by pouring water directly from a faucet or dipping one's hands into a cup.¹⁵¹
2. Anything that covers more than half of the hand or is something that one is normally careful about removing¹⁵² (even if it covers less than half of the hand), must be removed before washing. All jewelry, watches, bandages (except for those which are left on long term, like a cast) must be removed.¹⁵³
3. When the blessing is required, most recite the blessing after washing the hands and rubbing them together, but before drying them.¹⁵⁴

Washing Before a Meal

1. Washing is required before eating at least a *kezayit* of bread.¹⁵⁵ If at least a *kebeitzah* of bread is eaten, then the blessing "*Al Netilat Yadayim*" is recited.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁰ Biur Halacha 168:8 s.v. teunim. Since these foods do not contain all three possible conditions for pas habaah b'kisnin, they might be considered lechem which is covered by the Hamotzi at the beginning of the meal. Vezos HaBracha (p. 75) recommends having these cakes in mind during Hamotzi so they are certainly covered.

¹⁵¹ S"A 159:1. The three requirements of a vessel for washing are that it must (1) be able to hold at least one revi'it (S"A 159:3), (2) be able to hold liquid (S"A 159:4, excluding baskets that have been sealed or hats that can hold water without leaking), and (3) not have a hole large enough to allow water to enter from the outside of the vessel. A vessel with a hole, even if it can hold a revi'it beneath the hole, will still either be invalid or should be avoided (M"B 159:10).

If a cup is not available, one may also wash one's hands from a large water container with a plug stopping the flow of water (i.e. an urn), but replacing and removing the plug between each time one pours as long as the first flow covers each hands with a reviyit (M"B 159:64). One may not wash one's hand with a bracha directly from a faucet because the faucet is not considered a vessel (Rabbi Neustadt "Netilas Yadayim" ft. 20).

If a cup is not available, according to S"A 159:14, a person may dip his/her hands into a spring or a mikveh. Ashkenazim should try to use a mikveh that is more than 40 se'ah, the normal minimum size of a mikveh (Rama 159:14).

¹⁵² This is subjectively determined by individual behavior, and is therefore complicated. For example, S"A 161:1 says that clay or dough that is under the fingernail must be removed, but the Rama in 161:2 says that this is not a problem if the person is accustomed to it. The M"B adds that the statement of the Rama applies only if the clay is under the part of the nail that touches the skin of the finger. As a general rule, anything stuck underneath the part of the nail that protrudes past the finger should be removed before hand washing (S"A 161:1, M"B 161:2).

¹⁵³ S"A 161:3. A bandage need not be removed if there is no reason to believe that the wearer of the cast would remove it during the meal. A bandage used for a cut, which comes off easily and is frequently changed, needs to be removed. A brace which is not plastered on, but is adjusted more frequently, may need to be removed depending on how often the wearer adjusts and removes it.

¹⁵⁴ M"B 158:41, Ramah 158:11. If one forgets to recite the blessing until after the hands are dried, Sephardim say that the blessing may no longer be recited (Ben Ish Chai Shemini 7, Chacham Ovadia Yosef in Halichot Olam 1, p. 317). Ashkenazim, however, disagree, saying the blessing may still be recited (Rama 158:11, M"B 158:44). Rabbi Hershel Schachter recites the bracha prior to washing his hands (Ten Minute Halacha - Speaking Between Netilas Yadayim and the Bracha 6:35)

¹⁵⁵ This is the opinion of the S"A 158:3 and several others quoted in M"B 158:10. However, the M"B also cites some authorities who hold that washing is required even if the amount of bread one plans on eating is less than a kezayit. He therefore concludes that it is proper be stringent and wash, however, everyone agrees that "*Al Netilat Yadayim*" is not recited in such a case.

2. One should train children to wash before eating bread.¹⁵⁷
3. One should wash with a full *revi'it* of water on each hand, and the entire hand should be washed.¹⁵⁸

Hand Washing Upon Waking Up

1. It is necessary to wash one's hands upon waking up in the morning. Ideally, a full *revi'it* should be used per hand, and the entire hand should be washed. Each hand should be washed three times, alternating hands (right hand first, then left, right, left, right, and finally left).¹⁵⁹
2. Washing should be done first thing after reciting "*Modeh ani.*"¹⁶⁰ It is forbidden to learn Torah before washing.¹⁶¹ One should not touch food before washing.¹⁶² Ideally, one should not walk more than four *amot* before washing.¹⁶³ One may, however, get dressed before washing.¹⁶⁴
3. If one will need to use the bathroom before Shacharit, the hands should be washed without a blessing before using the bathroom upon waking up. After using the bathroom, the hands should be washed again. If one will be ready for *Shacharit* immediately afterward, the blessing should be recited then.¹⁶⁵ If one will not be ready immediately after using the bathroom, then some hold that the hands should be washed again immediately before *Shacharit* with the blessing.¹⁶⁶
4. In the following cases, the hands should be washed, but the blessing should not be recited: one who sleeps less than half an hour,¹⁶⁷ one who sleeps in a temporary fashion,¹⁶⁸ one who wakes up before *chatzot ha'lailah* (halachic midnight),¹⁶⁹ one who wakes up in the middle of the night and wants to eat or drink something.¹⁷⁰

Other Occasions

¹⁵⁶ S"A 158:2, M"B 158:9, and Yalkut Yosef Kitzur S"A 158:4. Nonetheless, Ritva on Sukkah 25a writes that the blessing "Al Netilat Yadayim" is required even for washing before a kezayit of bread. Vezot HaBracha chap 2, pg 13 (based on Igrot Moshe 4:44) and Rav Elyashiv agree with Ritva, but say that it is preferable to eat a kebaytzah in order to satisfy all opinions.

¹⁵⁷ Yalkut Yosef Dinei Netilat Yadayim, Birkat Hamazon, Brachot, Mincha and Arvit page 13-14.

¹⁵⁸ M"B 162:2-3. Although the minimum amount of water needed is a *revi'it* in total and although it is only necessary to wash the fingers (up to the knuckles connecting the fingers to the hand), due to certain complications that may arise if less water is used and only the fingers are washed the M"B recommends using more water. Nonetheless, if there is a limited amount of water, it is only necessary to use a *revi'it* in total and only necessary to wash the fingers up until one's knuckles. If this is done, the hands should be lifted so that the fingers are pointed upwards.

¹⁵⁹ M"B 4:9.

¹⁶⁰ M"B 1:8, Kitzur S"A 1:2, S"A HaRav 1:6.

¹⁶¹ M"B 1:8, S"A HaRav 1:6.

¹⁶² Yabia Omer 4:1, Otzrot Yosef 1:10

¹⁶³ M"B 1:1, Kitzur S"A 2:1.

¹⁶⁴ Yalkut Yosef (vol 1 pg 7), Sh"t Yabia Omer 5:1, Sh"t Otzrot Yosef 1:1

¹⁶⁵ M"B 4:4, Kitzur S"A 2:7

¹⁶⁶ M"B 4:4 says that this is the opinion of the Chayei Adam and cites "Ma'ase Rav" that this was the practice of the Vilna Gaon.

¹⁶⁷ Kitzur S"A 2:8.

¹⁶⁸ M"B 4:27, Ishei Yisrael 2:33, Birkei Yosef 4:5

¹⁶⁹ Beir Halacha 4:13 s.v. Kol, Ishei Yisrael 2:32, Dinei Nieyor Kol HaLaylah (pg 41). Furthermore, a person should rewash after *olot ha'shachar* with a blessing.

¹⁷⁰ Ohr L'tzion 2:1:8.

1. After the following activities, the hands should be washed without a blessing: going to the bathroom, touching one's legs, touching one's shoes, touching a part of the body that is normally covered, scratching one's head, and entering a cemetery.¹⁷¹

Mayim Achronim - Noam Itzhak

1. There is a halacha to wash one's hands after a bread meal before Birkat Hamazon.¹⁷² This washing, called "mayim achronim," was instituted in order to prevent Sedomite salt from getting into one's eyes, which could potentially cause blindness.¹⁷³
2. Many Ashkenazim have the custom not to wash mayim achronim because Sedomite salt is not around nowadays. However, other Ashkenazim hold that one should still wash mayim achronim.¹⁷⁴
3. Both men and women are obligated in mayim achronim,¹⁷⁵ but many Ashkenazi women have the custom not to wash mayim achronim.¹⁷⁶
4. Even Ashkenazim who are not stringent concerning mayim achronim are obligated to clean or wash their hands before Birkat Hamazon if their hands are dirty.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷¹ Yalkut Yosef 4:42, Kitzur S"A 2:9, S"A 4:18. M"B 4:38 adds that the hands only need to be washed up to the knuckles.

¹⁷² The rabbis loosely derived this from the pasuk "v'hiyitem kedoshim" - we should be holy (Brachot 53b).

¹⁷³ Brachot 53b, Chulin 105a-b. Rambam (Brachot 6:3), Rabbeinu Yonah (Brachot 40b), and Rif (Chulin 37b) hold that it applies because of the potential danger of the Sedomite salt. Raavad (Brachot 6:2), Rashba (Chulin 105a), and Rashbetz (Brachot ch. 8) seem to hold that the purpose is to have clean hands for Birkat Hamazon. S"A 181:1 rules that it is an obligation to do mayim achronim even nowadays.

¹⁷⁴ Tosfot (Brachot 53b, Chulin 105a, Eiruvim 17b) hold that there's no obligation to wash mayim achronim nowadays because the concern of Sedomite salt is no longer relevant. Rama in Darkei Moshe 181:1 and Levush 181:9 codify the opinion of Tosfot and add that this is the Ashkenazic minhag. The Gra 181:12, Aruch HaShulchan 181:5, and M"B 181:22, however, hold that it's preferable for Ashkenazim to wash mayim achronim.

¹⁷⁵ Torah Chaim Sofer 181:1, Sh"t Shalvat Chaim 119, Sh"t Rivivot Efraim 1:140(3), Sh"t Divrei Chachamim (pg. 62) in the name of Rav Elyashiv, Rav Ovadyah Yosef in Halichot Olam (vol. 2 shelach 1), Halacha Brurah 181:1, and Halichot Bat Yisrael (pg. 59) in the name of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach hold that women are obligated in mayim achronim.

¹⁷⁶ Rabbi Yitzchak Yaacov Fuchs in Halichos Bas Yisroel (pg. 59): "HaGaon Rav Shmuel HaLevi Wosner writes in Shevet HaLevi O.C 4:23, that the basis for women not washing mayim achronim is found in the S"A OC 181:10. Chazal explain that in Talmudic days a certain type of salt, called melach s'domith (salt from Sodom) was commonly used and that it could cause blindness if it came in contact with the eyes. The original purpose of mayim achronim was to rinse the melach s'domith off the hands. The S"A states that since this salt is no longer in use, the obligation of mayim achronim no longer applies. Although many men follow the view of other authorities who maintain that the mitzvah does apply today, women commonly follow the view of the S"A. HaGaon Rav Yonah Merzbach reports that in many German communities, before the Second World War, women omitted mayim achronim and that this practice was common even in households extremely scrupulous in the performance of mitzvot."

¹⁷⁷ S"A 181:10, from Tosfot (Brachot 53b), Nemukei Yosef, Rosh 8:6, Mordechai 191, Aguda 8, and Tur. So too, if one ate or drank not in a bread meal and one's hands are dirty, one must still wash the hands before making a bracha achrona. Even someone who touched an unclean area or a covered area on the body must clean or wash his hands in any way before making a bracha. Magen Avraham 181:10, Zechur LeAvraham 40, M"B 181:23, Kaf HaChaim 181:9, Pri Megadim A"A 9.

5. After washing mayim achronim, one should try to start Birkat Hamazon as soon as possible without interrupting, even with speech.¹⁷⁸
6. Mayim achronim doesn't require any specific amount of water. Some opinions say one should use a reviit and other opinions say that one should try to use as little water as possible.¹⁷⁹
7. It is permitted to wash one's hands under a running faucet.¹⁸⁰
8. One should wash up to the second set of knuckles on one's fingers, and on one's thumb one should wash up to the first knuckle. It's preferable to be strict for the opinion that one should wash the entirety of one's fingers.¹⁸¹
9. One may not wash over the ground, because "ruach rah" hovers over the water. One should rather wash into, in order of preference: a vessel; twigs or stones on the ground that absorb water; tiled flooring; unused ground, like under the table; and certainly the drain of a sink.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ Kesef Mishna (Brachot 6:20), from Rashi and Rambam, holds that speech is not an interruption. M"B 179:1 writes that the Magen Avraham is strict and M"B 181:24 is strict even for divrei torah.. This is also the opinion of the Eliyah Raba 179:1, Pri Migadim A"A 179:1 and other achronim. Interestingly however, Baer Heitev 179:1 understands the Magen Avraham 179:1 as being lenient. Aruch HaShulchan 181:1 is lenient like the Kesef Mishna. Kitzur S"A of Yalkut Yosef 181:20 writes that one should not interrupt to speak unless it is for divrei torah. Ben Ish Chai Shelach 15 writes even though one should not interrupt even in divrei torah, one should recite the pesukim that it is customary to recite before Birkat Hamazon such as "Lamnatzeach Binginot" or "Shir Hamaalot," after mayim achronim. Aruch Hashulchan 181:9 thinks that one should ideally recite this before washing.

¹⁷⁹ The Rashba (Torat HaBayit 6:2) writes that there's no specific amount one needs to use for mayim achronim. The Orchot Chaim Netilat Yadayim 31 and Kolbo 23, in the name of Raavad, agree. This is codified by the Levush 181:7, Ateret Zekinim 181:1, S"A Harav 181:4, and Kaf Hachaim 181:4. The M"B 181:19, however, notes that the practice of the Gra was to use a reviit. On the other hand, Chida in Simchat Regel (Seder Birkat Hamazon) and Ben Ish Chai (Shalach 8) argue that one should try to use as little water as possible. Accordingly, the Birur Halacha 181:13 writes that if one's hands are dirty one should first wash them to clean them and then wash them again with the intent to satisfy the obligation of mayim achronim.

¹⁸⁰ Raavad in Tamim Daim 66, Orchot Chaim Netilat Yadayim 31, and Kolbo 23, against Riaz Netilat Yadayim 8:20.

¹⁸¹ Based on Rashba Torat Bayit 6:1 and Raavad, the S"A 181:4 rules that one should wash one's fingers up to the second row of knuckles. Rabbenu Bechaye in Shulchan Shel Arba, however, requires one to wash the fingers completely. M"B 181:10 quotes Talmidei Rabbenu Yonah, who say that the thumb must only be washed up to the first knuckle. Halacha Brurah 181:11 agrees. Beur Halacha s.v. 'Ad Perek Sheni' and Kaf HaChaim 181:17 agree that it's preferable to be strict for the opinion of the Arizal, that one should wash one's whole finger. Rabbi Mansour on dailyhalacha.com quotes the S"A and says to preferably be machmir for the opinion of the Arizal (to wash the entirety of the fingers). Halacha Brurah 181:11 agrees.

¹⁸² S"A 181:2 from Chulin 105a. Many Rishonim hold like this. The Magen Avraham 181:2 quotes in the name of the Chinuch that anything stopping the water from pouring onto the ground would work, but Rambam (Brachot 6:16) seems to only allow a vessel. The Gra 181:4 explains the S"A that ideally we follow Rambam, but if there's no vessel available then we can rely on Rashba (Torat Bayit 6:2) and Tur (181:2). Yabia Omer O"C 5:2 permits using a sink for netilat yadayim in the morning and all the more so for mayim achronim. Birur Halacha 181:8 concludes that one can pour the water onto the ground after washing a vessel.

10. According to the strict law, one doesn't have to dry one's hands. Nonetheless, it's preferable to be strict and to dry one's hands.¹⁸³
11. If one forgot to wash mayim achronim before Birkat Hamazon or did not have water, one must wash after Birkat Hamazon.¹⁸⁴

Pizza - Dani Caplan

1. Regular pizza made without fruit juice, according to Sephardim is Hamotzi. According to Ashkenazim, some say that one slice is Mezonot and two is Hamotzi if it is common to eat it as a snack in that time and place, whereas others consider even one crumb to be Hamotzi. Certainly if one eats other foods with a slice of pizza, such as french fries, one should make Hamotzi.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ S"A 181:8. Bet Yosef quotes Rashba in Torat HaBayit 6:2 that one doesn't need to dry one's hands and the Rambam Brachot 6:20 who holds that one needs to dry one's hands. The S"A brings both opinions but the M"B 181:21 points out that in siman 173, the S"A implies that he holds mayim achronim doesn't require drying.

¹⁸⁴ Chesed La'Alafim 181:8, Ben Ish Chai Shelach 11, Kaf Chaim 181:26, and M"B 181:2 against the Ometz Yozfa 155, who says not to wash because it degrades the sanctity of Birkat Hamazon.

¹⁸⁵ The question of whether to say a Hamotzi or Mezonos on one slice of pizza comes down to whether or not it is considered Pas Haba'ah B'Kisnin.

The Shulchan Aruch 168:7 says that if a food fits into any of the three categories of Pas Haba'ah B'Kisnin, the food item would be considered Pas Haba'ah B'Kisnin. Therefore, if pizza is included in any of the three categories, it can fall under the definition of Pas Haba'ah B'Kisnin:

1. It may fit the first definition of being filled with something sweet according to the Taz 168:20, as there is cheese cooked with the dough. The Taz writes that even items that are not necessarily sweet, like meat and fish, can cause the food to become Pas Haba'ah B'Kisnin.
2. If the dough is made with fruit juice or milk, the pizza may fit the second definition of the dough being mixed with a taste-altering ingredient.
3. It would not fit into the third definition of having a dry, cracker-like texture.

We see that pizza can possibly fit into two of the categories. Seemingly, pizza should be included in the category of pas haba'ah b'kisnin. Even if pizza is considered pas haba'ah b'kisnin, we still need to establish what constitutes being "Koveah Seudah" by pizza.

Regarding pizza, Rav Moshe Feinstein (quoted by Vezot Habracha p. 230) is quoted as saying that one would only say Hamotzi on two slices or more, as that was what he considered to be a meal. However, if one would eat one slice with other food, like french fries, and complete the measurement for a "Seudah Kevuah," one would certainly need to say Hamotzi. The Magen Avraham 168:13 states that even if one eats less than the requisite measurement of pas haba'ah b'kisnin, but completes that measurement with other food items (such as herring with crackers), one would be required to say Hamotzi. Rav Moshe Feinstein (O.C. 3:32) thought that this applies to any pas haba'ah b'kisnin, whereas Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky (cited by Vezot HaBracha p. 33) held that this only applies to a pas haba'ah b'kisnin which is regularly eaten with meat or condiments, such as crackers and the like. Even according to Rav Yaakov, pizza would seem to fit this category of pas haba'ah b'kisnin that are eaten together with meal type meals unlike cake.

There is another way to look at the sources for pas haba'ah b'kisnin. Firstly, the Shulchan Aruch 168:17 says that one should say Hamotzi on a "Pashtida," which is defined as something baked with meat, fish, or cheese. Secondly, we must understand why the Shulchan Aruch accepts all three definitions of pas haba'ah b'Kisnin. The Be'ur Halacha quotes the Ma'amar Mordechai who says that the Shulchan Aruch was saying that all three definitions were actually in agreement. It seems that they were all explaining "snack-type" foods. Meaning, whatever is normally eaten as a snack would be under the category of pas

Bamba - Mordechai Djavaheri

1. Many are of the opinion that since the corn flour in Bamba is totally unrecognizable, the bracha on Bamba is Shehakol.¹⁸⁶ However, some claim that since the corn in Bamba is grown specifically for Bamba and since there are few additional ingredients besides for the puffed corn flour, the bracha remains Haadama.¹⁸⁷

Granola Bars - Ike Sultan

1. The bracha for raw grains is Haadama with a bracha achrona of boreh nefashot, however, some say one should make sure to eat the raw grains during a meal.¹⁸⁸
2. The majority of poskim assume that oats are considered one of the five grains.¹⁸⁹

haba'ah b'kisnin. However, if it would be a “meal-type” food, then one would always be required to say Hamotzi on it.

Rav Mordechai Willig (Am Mordechai Brachos p. 100) says that since the pizza is considered to be the main part of a meal (a “meal-type food”), it would require a Hamotzi. Additionally, it says in Vesot Habracha that Rav Moshe Feinstein ruled that pizza required a Mezonos since it used to be eaten as a snack. Nowadays, however, when pizza is mainly eaten as a meal, it would require a Hamotzi.

¹⁸⁶ Vezot Habracha pg. 389, Birkhot Eliyahu pg. 100

¹⁸⁷ Rabbi Yitzchak Yosef (Yalkut Yosef 203:6, v. 3 p. 422) testifies that he saw his father (Chacham Ovadia Yosef) make a Haadama on Bamba on Pesach. However, Rabbi Meir Mazuz (ykr.org.il) and Rav Dovid Yosef (ibid.) hold that Bamba is Shehakol. See Rabbi David Yosef (Halacha Brurah vol. 8 pg 222) who quotes his father as saying that anything that undergoes a change of shape and taste becomes Shehakol, seemingly disputing his brother.

¹⁸⁸ Brachot 37a states that eating raw kernels of wheat is Haadama and Rashi explains that this is considered the abnormal way to eat wheat. However, once wheat is cooked, the bracha is Mezonot. Tosfot (ad loc. s.v. hakoses) and Rosh (Brachot 6:9) write that cooking or roasting whole kernels of wheat does not change the bracha from Haadama to Mezonot. Only after the kernels are crushed and cooked into a dish do the kernels become Mezonot. The Rabbenu Yonah (25b s.v. chavitz) goes further and says that the wheat needs to be cooked to the point that the grains stick together to be considered Mezonot.

In slightly different terms, the Rambam (Brachot 8:4) writes that grain is considered cooked if it is split or broken and then cooked. In a general sense, these rishonim agree that raw or roasted wheat is Haadama and that cooked wheat is Mezonot. As to the extent of their disagreement, the Magen Avraham 208:2 postulates that the Rambam holds even if the wheat kernel is merely dehusked and then cooked the bracha is Mezonot. The Mishna Brurah 208:4, however, quotes a number of dissenting opinions who hold that dehusking and cooking the grain does not make it Mezonot. He resolves the matter by saying if the kernels were dehusked and then stick together through the cooking process, the bracha is Mezonot. Vezot Habracha (p. 282-3) discusses this point and concludes that unless a significant piece of the kernel was removed, the bracha is not Mezonot.

Regarding bracha achrona, Tosfot 37a s.v. HaKoses writes that perhaps the bracha achrona for raw grain is al Haadama. However, Rosh 6:9 and Rambam 3:2 reject this postulation and rule that the bracha achrona is boreh nefashot. S”A 208:4 rules like the Rambam but adds that some say one should be strict and only eat it in a meal. Vezot HaBracha (pg 103) writes that an alternative is to eat less than a kezayit in kedi achilat pras. Aruch HaShulchan 208:9 and Kaf HaChaim 208:30 write that another alternative is to have a food that is certainly Mein Shalosh and something that is certainly Boreh Nefashot and together it will exempt the raw grain. This idea is rejected by the Mishna Brurah 208:18, though it seems to be supported by the Raavan (Brachot n. 190).

¹⁸⁹ As to the identification of שיעורל שועל as oats, while some poskim raise significant arguments to question this definition, the minhag is to accept it as one of the five grains. Vetan Bracha (Halachos of Brochos by Rabbi Bodner pg 480, chapter 27), The Laws of Brachos (Rabbi Forst, chap 8, pg 230), and Vezot HaBracha (chap 12, pg 102) all assume that oats are considered one of the five grains. Dr. Yehuda

3. Some recite Haadama on granola while others recite Mezonot. Rav Schachter holds it is Haadama, while Rav Willig considers it Mezonot.¹⁹⁰
4. If granola is Mezonot, the bracha on granola bars is Mezonot. Otherwise, in most cases the bracha is Haadama.¹⁹¹

Felix (Kilei Zraim Vharkava pp. 24-9) questions this definition and argues that oats are not one of the five grains. Rav Schachter (“Laws and Customs of Pesach” min 79-82) strongly favors Dr. Felix’s argument, however, he considers American oats, which contain gluten, to be Mezonot. Rav Willig (Beit Yitzchak v. 40 p. 58) agrees.

¹⁹⁰ Granola is a breakfast and snack food consisting of rolled oats, nuts, and honey, that is usually baked until crisp. The main ingredient in granola is rolled oats, though sometimes puffed rice is added. Rolled oats are traditionally oat kernels that have been dehusked, steamed, and then rolled into flat flakes under heavy rollers before being stabilized by being lightly toasted (Wikipedia, “Rolled Oats”). Some companies do not steam the rolled oats and others cook them completely. Vezot Habracha (p. 288) found that Quaker and Kellogg's only steam rolled oats.

According to many poskim, rolled oats are considered insufficiently cooked to be considered Mezonot and the correct bracha on granola would be Haadama (Vezot Habracha p. 103 citing Rav Shlomo Zalman; Rav Schachter (oral communication); Rav Melamed). See Vezot HaBracha (Birur Halacha 27:3:2) who develops the thesis that the definitions set by chazal regarding brachot do not change over the generations (see, however, Rabbenu Yonah Brachot 26a s.v. VeHaPat). Others, however, hold that the definition of cooking with respect to raw grains depends on the generation and since granola is considered a normal food, the bracha is Mezonot (Rav Mordechai Willig (oral communication), Rav Tzvi Sobolofsky (oral communication), Laws of Brachos p. 369, Rav Moshe Heinemann (star-k.org)). Or Letzion (v. 2, p. 307) agrees for other reasons. Rav Elyashiv (Vezot Habracha p. 103, 288) seems to hold like this second opinion, yet some quote him as saying that the definitions set by Chazal regarding brachot do not change. Mekor Bracha (no. 54) leaves it as a safek. Some add an additional reason to recite Mezonot on granola bars since the rolled oats stick together (Vezot Habracha p. 289 citing Rav Elyashiv, Rav Forst in Pitchei Halacha p. 334, Halacha Brurah).

¹⁹¹ With respect to ikar v'tofel, if the rolled oats are Mezonot, the halacha of ‘kol she’yesh bo’ dictates that anything with an admixture of the five grains is Mezonot even if the ingredient from the five grains is the minority (Brachot 36b, S”A 208:2). However, if the rolled oats are Haadama, they do not receive special treatment in the laws of ikar v'tofel (Shaar HaTziyun 208:27 following the Even HaOzer, Vezot Habracha, p. 103, Seder Brachot p. 231). If so, the regular rules of ikar v'tofel would lead us to the following distinction: if the rolled oats are the primary component and the other ingredients just enhance it, the bracha follows the bracha on rolled oats (Mishna Brurah 212:6, Vezot HaBracha p. 89). On this basis, Rav Belsky (quoted by Rav Schachter, oral communication) holds that granola bars are Haadama even if they constitute the minority. However, if the rolled oats are just as significant as the other ingredients, then since it is treated as a mixture (Aruch Hashulchan 212:2), the bracha is judged based on the majority ingredient (S”A 208:7, Mishna Brurah 212:1, Vezot HaBracha p. 90).

Yet, if there is no majority, such as if there is one third Ha’etz, one third Haadama, and one third Shehakol, the bracha is not determined by the food of greatest volume. In fact, Vezot Habracha (p. 94) writes that one should make three brachot for such a food since there’s no primary ingredient and no majority. Based on this, the author of Vezot Habracha (in a shiur) said that Quaker granola bars composed of rolled oats, rice, and chocolate chips theoretically is Mezonot, Haadama, and Shehakol since none are primary and none constitute a majority. However, he added that since it is hard to separate each ingredient, one should just recite Shehakol, which is certainly sufficient after the fact (S”A 204:13). Additionally, it is very reasonable that the Vezot Habracha would agree that one should not separate out ingredients that are non-distinguishable and totally lost in the mixture, such as soy protein or rice syrup in a granola bar, rather one should exempt them via ikar v'tafel (Piskei Teshuvot 202 note 87, 202:20).

Brachos based on the opinion of Rav Schachter Shlit" a

Flavor	Bracha Rishona	Bracha Achrona	Flavor	Bracha Rishona	Bracha Achrona
Clif Bar Original			Balance Bar		
Apricot	Haadama*	B"N	Cookie Dough	Mezonot	B"N
Banana Nut Bread	Haadama*	B"N	Peanut Butter	Shehakol	B"N
Black Cherry Almond	Haadama*	B"N	Yogurt Honey Peanut	Shehakol	B"N
Blueberry Crisp	Haadama*	B"N	Honey Peanut	Shehakol	B"N
Carrot Cake	Haadama*	B"N	Chocolate Mint Cookie Crunch	Shehakol	B"N
Chocolate Almond Fudge	Haadama*	B"N	Kind Bars		
Chocolate Brownie	Haadama*	B"N	Fruit and Nut Delight	Haetz	B"N
Chocolate Chip	Haadama*	B"N	Caramel Almond and Sea Salt	Haetz	B"N
Chocolate Chip Peanut Crunch	Haadama*	B"N	Almond and Coconut	Haetz	B"N
Coconut Chocolate Chip	Haadama*	B"N	Cranberry Almond	Haetz	B"N
Cool Mint Chocolate	Mezonot	A"H	Dark Chocolate Mocha Almond	Haetz	B"N
Crunchy Peanut Butter	Haadama*	B"N	Kelloggs NutriGrain Cereal Bars		
Maple Nut	Haadama*	B"N	Blueberry	Mezonot	A"H
Oatmeal Raisin Walnut	Haadama*	B"N	Cherry	Mezonot	A"H
Peanut Toffee Buzz	Haadama*	B"N	Strawberry	Mezonot	A"H
Sierra Trail Mix	Haadama*	B"N	Odwalla Protein Bars		
White Chocolate Macadamia Nut	Haadama*	B"N	Super Protein	Shehakol	B"N
Clif Bar Mojo			Chocolate Chip Peanut	Mezonot	B"N
Coconut Almond Peanut	Haadama	B"N	Chocolate Almond Coconut Chewy	Haadama*	B"N
Cranberry Almond	Haetz	B"N	Weight Watchers		
Wild Blueberry Almond	Haetz	B"N	Oh So Nuts	Haadama	B"N
Clif Bar Builders Bar			Aloha Almond Bar	Haetz	B"N
Chocolate	Shehakol	B"N	Trader Joe's		
Chocolate Chip	Shehakol**	B"N	Apple and Mango Fruit Bar	Haetz	B"N
Chocolate Mint	Shehakol	B"N	Crunchy Peanut	Haadama*	B"N
Chocolate Peanut Butter	Shehakol**	B"N	Crunch Oats & Honey	Haadama*	B"N
Cookies 'n Cream	Shehakol	B"N	Clif Bar Luna Bar		
Crunchy Peanut Butter	Shehakol	B"N	Blueberry Bliss	Haadama*	B"N
S'mores	Mezonot	B"N	Caramel Nut Brownie	Shehakol	B"N
Vanilla Almond	Shehakol	B"N	Carrot Cake	Haadama*	B"N
Nature Valley Granola Bar			Chocolate Dipped Coconut	Haadama*	B"N
Oats and Honey	Haadama*	B"N	Chocolate Peppermint Stick	Mezonot	B"N
Vanilla Yogurt Bar	Mezonot	B"N	Iced Oatmeal Raisin	Haadama*	B"N
NuGo			Lemon Zest	Haadama*	B"N
Mint Chocolate Chip	Shehakol	B"N	Nuts Over Chocolate	Haadama*	B"N
Chocolate Chocolate Chip	Shehakol	B"N	Peanut Butter Cookie	Haadama*	B"N
Mocha Chocolate	Shehakol	B"N	Peanut Honey Pretzel	Mezonot	B"N
Peanut Butter Cup	Shehakol	B"N	S'mores	Haadama*	B"N
Chocolate Pretzel	Shehakol	B"N	Toasted Nuts 'n Cranberry	Haadama*	B"N
Quaker Chewy Granola Bar			Vanilla Almond	Haadama*	B"N
Chocolate Chip	Mezonot	A"H	White Chocolate Macadamia	Haadama*	B"N

*Mezonot and Al Hamichya according to other Roshei Yeshiva
 **Mezonot and Boreh Nefashot according to other Roshei Yeshiva