



5776/2015-2016: HILCHOT BRACHOT

**Note: All פסקי הלכה taught in this course follow the rulings stipulated by the TorahLive curriculum following Rabbi Yitzchak Berkovits, שליט"א, as well as in ספר ותן ברכה by Rabbi Yisroel Pinchos Bodner (Feldheim Publishers, 1989).*

WEEK 3, LESSONS #1-3: עיקר וטפל

The teacher has a variety of options how to teach this unit. Supplied in this lesson is Rabbi Bodner's approach, as delineated in his sefer. TorahLive has a fantastic unit as well. There are two parts to TorahLive's work:

- *A fully narrated **video***
- *A teacher-narrated **presentation**. The full text of the video is found in the presentation notes.*

We would suggest that everyone at least show the first 4 or so minutes of the presentation, (through 4:35) or begin the presentation, which explains the two basic possibilities of עיקר וטפל. The presentation has more possibilities at the end of it, which will hopefully lead to lively discussion. Whatever you choose, here are the options:

VIDEO: *Log in to TorahLive, Learn>Courses>Blessings, scroll to the Primary and Secondary Foods video (11:16).*

TEACHER PRESENTATION: *Log in to TorahLive, Learn>Courses>Blessings, hit the ORANGE "Teacher's Materials" tab and download the Instructor's Guide (PDF). The notes begin on page 113. These notes are for the teacher to guide the presentation.*

Then, in class, open the Classroom Presentation (above the Instructor's Guide), hit the HOME icon (top right) and then Before-Blessing>Primary and Secondary Foods>General Rule (which is the equivalent of the suggestion above) and then Practical Cases for discussion. (Click Right on the keyboard to advance images.)

**Note: TorahLive and Rabbi Bodner will present differing opinions on occasion. In such a case, inform the students that the topic is debated in Halacha and both are valid opinions. Encourage them to ask their local Orthodox Rabbi.*

This unit will cover the following:

- The **concept** of עיקר וטפל, primary and secondary foods
- **Absolute טפל**: when one food is not eaten for its own purpose at all
- **Enhancers**: when one food is eaten only to **enhance** another food
- **Single entity mixtures**: foods that were mixed, cooked, baked or blended together
- **Non single entity mixtures**: food combinations that are not considered one entity
- **Additional rules of עיקר וטפל**

Concept

1. We have learned how to recognize individual foods and categorize them according to their correct ברכות. We will now embark on a new concept: making a ברכה (or two ברכות) on a food that is comprised of two (or more) foods.
 - a. Common examples of “mixtures” where two or more foods are eaten together but only one ברכה is made:
 - i. Cereal and milk: the ברכה on the cereal covers the milk
 - ii. French fries and ketchup: the האדמה on the fries covers the ketchup
 - iii. Greek salad: the האדמה on the lettuce and other vegetables covers the feta cheese and olives
 - b. The students may enjoy coming up with other mixtures on their own.
2. The משנה in (מדא, א) ברכות says that when there are two foods eaten together, “מברך על העיקר ופותר את הטפילה” - one makes a ברכה on the “primary” food and this ברכה exempts the “secondary” food. This will be defined throughout the lesson.

טפל Absolute

3. In the case of an **absolute טפל**, **one food is not eaten for its own usual role at all** and its consumption is solely for sake of the other food. *Note: A true case of absolute טפל is somewhat uncommon and will likely not occur on a frequent basis.*
 - a. Example: You (foolishly) accepted a dare to eat a full spoonful of the hottest chili in town. You made a האדמה, ate the chili but had no idea how hot it really was. You need something else to eat (now!) in order to alleviate the intense burning. You can choose milk or bread to neutralize the burn. In this case, neither the milk nor the bread are eaten for their enjoyable taste, nor for any sort of satiation. Because they are only eaten for the sake of the chili, they would be fully covered by the ברכה on the chili and would require no ברכה.
 - i. This is true even though bread is never usually considered secondary in importance to other foods. Its ברכה is only “ignored” in this case when it is eaten in this uniquely subordinate manner and you would clearly not be eating it had you not eaten the chili first.

- b. The גמרא provides an additional example of when one eats fish preserved by heavy salting (see [here](#) for how much salt we're talking about!) which needed bread to be eaten along with it. The bread there was certainly not consumed for its own purposes and would therefore be covered by the ברכה on the fish.

Enhancers

4. When two foods are eaten together and one food is only eaten to enhance the other, **the enhancer is seen as טפל to the first food** and only the first food gets a ברכה.
 - a. Example: French fries and ketchup or applesauce on latkes would require only a האדמה. Apples and peanut butter would only require a העץ.
 - b. **This “enhancing” is subjective:** you might want to eat peanut butter and desire an apple only to provide a contrasting sweet taste. In this instance you would only make a ברכה on the peanut butter (שהכל for creamy or האדמה for chunky) and the apple would be considered the טפל food.
5. This exemption of the enhancer is only **when a טפל is eaten together with an עיקר**.
 - a. Example: if you eat latkes with applesauce, the applesauce is covered by the ברכה on the latkes only if consumed together with the latkes. If there is extra applesauce left on the plate once you have finished all of the latkes you can finish it without making another ברכה. If, however, you want to eat more applesauce by itself afterwards, you would then need to recite a proper ברכה on the applesauce (שהכל if it is finely processed, העץ if it has chunks of apple).
6. The rule of enhancer has a limitation: **If an enhancer is מזונות, it won't lose its ברכה**.
 - a. Example: most people would consider ice cream cones to be טפל, secondary, to the ice cream since no one goes out to Baskin Robbins for ice cream cones without ice cream! Nevertheless, because they are a מזונות item they will not lose their ברכה and will require one despite being the טפל food.
 - b. Example: if you eat tuna or cheese on a cracker, the cracker is *usually* the עיקר, gets the ברכה, and the tuna or cheese is the טפל and receives no ברכה. However, if the main food for you is the tuna or cheese and the cracker is only added as an enhancer (you just want it for the crunch or salty taste) the tuna or cheese will require its own ברכה, but the cracker will still not lose its ברכה. This is because of the חשיבות of מזונות.
7. Exception: Although rice gets a מזונות (remember: אורז מזונות נפשות - א.מ.ג.) it is still not one of the מיני דגן /ה' five מזונות grains, and **will therefore always lose its ברכה when used only as an enhancer**.
 - a. So in the above example if you are eating tuna or cheese on a rice cake and you only want the rice cake for its crunch, you would not make a ברכה on it as you would on a cracker made from wheat. Despite its ברכה being מזונות, it will be covered by the שהכל you make on the tuna or cheese.

Single Entity Mixtures

8. **When two or more foods are combined into a mixture that is considered a *single entity*, only one ברכה is required**, that of the עיקר. However, determining the appropriate ברכה for a mixture involves being able to resolve the following:

a. Is this mixture in fact considered a single entity?

- i. **A mixture is Halachically deemed a single entity when the ingredients are *cooked or baked into a single entity***, like in chicken stir fry or shepherd's pie. This can also occur **when small ingredients are *mixed or blended together***, like Israeli salad or a fruit smoothie.
- ii. Mixtures where the ingredients are still distinct and clearly recognizable (soups, stews, casseroles) are still considered to be a single entity requiring just one ברכה.
- iii. Note that not all foods mixed or cooked together are considered a single entity. **The pieces must be small enough that they are usually eaten in a single spoonful.** So roast chicken and whole potatoes would not be considered a single entity and would require two separate ברכות. Likewise, Cholent with very large pieces of potato or meat would not be considered a single entity and the meat or potatoes would require separate ברכות.

b. If it is a single entity, what ingredient is considered to be the עיקר?

- i. **If the mixture contains a מזונת food other than rice** (see #7 above), **the מזונת is always the עיקר**, even if the other ingredients are the majority, more expensive, or more preferred.
 1. Examples: deli roll, Cholent containing barley, cherry pie and potato knishes would all require a מזונת despite the presence of other ingredients.
 2. Exception: **When the מזונת is used in a non-significant way, it loses its חשיבות and is no longer considered to be the עיקר.**
 - a. Example: flour used ONLY as a binding or thickening agent in meatballs, falafel balls, gefilte fish, licorice, kugels, soups, sauces, etc. The presence of a מזונת ingredient here would not determine the ברכה.
 - b. Example: cheesecake or fruit pies that have a *very* thin crust. The presence of the מזונת is deemed insignificant and it would not determine the ברכה.
 - c. Example: schnitzel, fried fish or onion rings that have a very thin coating of batter or breadcrumbs. Again, because the מזונת ingredient is so insignificant, and you are obviously not primarily eating the food for its coating, the correct ברכה would be שהכל on the chicken or fish

and האדמה on the cooked onion. If, however, the coating is very thick (think: Dougie's onion rings), the correct ברכה on the chicken, fish or onion rings would be מזונות since the thick coating is no longer considered to be insignificant.

- ii. **If one ingredient in the mixture is clearly being used only to enhance another, the enhancing ingredient is טפל** and the ingredient it is enhancing will be considered the עיקר.
 1. Example: the ברכה on pepper steak containing a majority of peppers and onions and small pieces of meat would be שהכל since the peppers are added primarily to enhance the flavor of the meat.
 2. Example: chocolate covered fruit or nuts (Raisinets). This example is tricky as it is unclear whether the raisin enhances the chocolate or whether the chocolate enhances the raisin. There are actually three possibilities here, that will vary from person to person or even with the same person, depending on his mood at the time:
 - a. If you prefer chocolate or are in the mood for chocolate: make only a שהכל as the raisin is merely the enhancer.
 - b. If you prefer raisins or are in the mood for raisins: make a העץ as the chocolate is merely the enhancer.
 - c. If you prefer the unique combination of a chocolate covered raisin and you don't perceive either ingredient as coming to enhance the other, make the ברכה on the majority ingredient (more on this below).
- iii. If a mixture contains neither a מזונות ingredient nor an obvious enhancer, **the majority ingredient** is considered to be the עיקר.
 1. Example: the correct ברכה on a fruit salad would depend on whether there are more העץ fruits (most fruits) or האדמה fruits (bananas, strawberries, pineapples, melons).
 2. Example: Raisinets for one who prefers neither chocolate nor raisins (see above).

Non Single Entity Mixtures

9. **When foods are eaten in combinations that are not Halachically classified as a single entity, separate ברכות would be required** for the various foods.
 - a. What kind of mixtures are NOT considered to be single entities?

- i. When **solid food pieces are mixed with a beverage** (and they were not cooked together), the resulting product would not be considered a single entity.
 1. Example: noodles, soup nuts (croutons) or Matzoh balls added to soup. Because it is not one entity, the **מזונות** would not cover the soup and it would require its own **ברכה**. Despite the fact that the soup nuts, noodles or Matzoh balls are merely coming to enhance the soup, because of the **חשיבות** of **מזונות** they would require their own **ברכה** (see #6 above). Therefore, the correct procedure when eating soup with **מזונות** added to (not cooked with) it is to make two separate **ברכות**: first a **מזונות** on the added enhancer and then a **ברכה** on the soup itself (**האדמה** or **שהכל** depending on ingredients and how finely processed it is).
 2. Example: cereal and milk. Although it is not a single entity mixture, the **ברכה** on the cereal covers the milk since the milk is clearly being eaten only to enhance the cereal (see 4 above).
 3. Exception: when the liquid is absorbed into the solid it is then considered to be a single entity. Therefore, when you dip an Oreo cookie or doughnut into milk or coffee, you would only need to say a **מזונות**.
- ii. Two different **foods eaten on top of each other** “sandwich style” are not considered to be a single entity (unless they were baked together).
 1. Example: most people eat ice cream sandwiches because they enjoy both the cookie and the ice cream, with neither ingredient coming to enhance the other. Because it is not a single entity mixture, the **מזונות** on the cookie will not cover the ice cream and two **ברכות** are therefore required.
 2. Example: crackers with tuna or cheese. If the tuna or cheese is being eaten for its own sake and not merely to enhance the crackers (see 6b above), two **ברכות** would be required since this mixture is not a single entity where the **מזונות** would cover the other ingredients.

עיקר וטפל of Additional Rules

10. טפל to a טפל: **When one food is טפל to another food that is itself טפל, it too is covered by the ברכה on the עיקר.**

- a. Example: frosting comes to enhance a cake and is therefore covered by the **מזונות** on the cake. A cherry placed on top of the frosting in order to enhance it is covered by the original **מזונות** made on the cake.

- b. Example: you are eating crackers and add some cheese to enhance their flavor. You then add a sliced tomato to the cheese to enhance it. The original **מזונות** on the cracker covers all three foods.
11. When making two **ברכות** on a main food and an enhancer, the two **ברכות** are not said immediately one after the other. As with any **ברכה** on food, one must eat immediately after saying the **ברכה**. Therefore, one would say a **ברכה**, eat a bite of the **עיקר**, swallow, and only then say a **ברכה** on the **טפל**.
12. **ברכה אחרונה**: Just as the **ברכה ראשונה** on the **עיקר** covers the **טפל**, **the ברכה אחרונה said on the עיקר covers the טפל**.

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