



5776/2015-2016: HILCHOT BRACHOT

**Note: All פסקי הלכה taught in this course follow the rulings stipulated in ספר ותן ברכה by Rabbi Yisroel Pinchos Bodner (Feldheim Publishers, 1989).*

WEEK #1, LESSON #4: BRACHA RISHONA (BEFORE BRACHA) - HAMOTZI & MEZONOT

- I. Now that we've covered *how* to make a Bracha, it's time to start learning the correct Brachot to make on the foods we eat! We'll be starting with the two Brachot that are recited on foods made from grain: **בורא מיני מזונות and המוציא לחם מן הארץ**. These two Brachot are considered to be the two most "important," or chashuv, of the six types of Bracha Rishona.
 - A. TorahLive does an excellent job with this unit. Log in and select the course on "Blessings." There is a video under the blue "Course" tab entitled "Grain Products" that does the teaching for you and incorporates the various Halachot on this topic. The video runs 7 minutes and 23 seconds but goes through the laws very quickly, one after the other and chances are the students will not process much of anything if all they do is see the video. It's best to teach the material off of the SmartBoard using the TorahLive slides and speaking notes which contain very impressive graphics and spell out the Halachot very clearly. (38 minutes)
 1. The slides are found under the orange "Teacher Materials" tab. Open the "Classroom Presentation" which has all the graphics and videos for the entire course. This is the presentation that they suggest you play for the class and do the teaching from. From the Main Menu, select "Before Blessing" and from there select "Hamotzee and Mezonot." If you feel a particular video is playing for too long and you're done explaining can simply click on the SmartBoard to move to the next slide. (It's a really good idea to do a run through before the class to make sure you can get all the materials to play without difficulty!)
 - a) There are four subcategories in the "Hamotzee and Mezonot" section:
 - (1) "Introduction" defines a grain product and explains how the Bracha said is dependent on how the food is made and normally eaten (i.e. raw, puffed, fried cooked, baked, etc.). The students may not realize that not everything made from grain is Hamotzi or Mezonot. This section also covers the Machloket surrounding granola bars.
 - (2) "Making Hamotzee" goes through the correct way to make the Hamotzi blessing (beyond the general procedure for all Brachot): how to hold the bread, lifting it, when one may speak, eating a Kzayit, etc.
 - (3) "Bread Meal" explains the well known concept that bread exempts other foods and therefore many foods eaten during a bread meal would not require their own Bracha (provided that a Kzayit of bread will actually be eaten). More importantly, it goes through the exceptions to this rule and the many dessert foods which would require a Bracha Rishona, as well as the ones that would not. Pat Haba Bikisnin is defined, explained and applied to various and commonly eaten foods today.

- (a) Back in the blue "Courses" tab there is a short video (5 minutes, 29 seconds) entitled "Foods during a meal" that teaches this specific topic, that of bread exempting other foods. It goes through all of the definitions of Pat Haba Bikisnin and explains the Halachot that pertain to them when eaten with and without bread. This particular video is very methodical and clear and can definitely be used to teach from in lieu of the slides, especially if you're trying to save time.
- (4) "Bread Variations" delineates the Bracha to recite on products made from bread. For some reason, the speaking notes contain the picture of the food but the Halacha is not explained (it says it's "coming soon"?). Here is the bottom line of what Bracha to recite on the products listed, as per Rabbi Bodner's Sefer:
- (a) Bread crumbs or Matzoh meal - it's not so normal to eat them plain but if you did, you'd have to wash and make HAMOTZI. If you ate enough you'd even have to recite Birchat Hamazon. Please find something better to eat for lunch!
- (b) Matzoh Brei - a Pesach favorite! This is a somewhat complicated one. If the pieces are smaller than a Kzayit (1/3 of a machine made Matzoh) and have been *deep fried* (i.e. completely submerged in oil) the correct Bracha is MEZONOT. If they are large pieces and pan fried with only a little bit of oil it presents a serious Halachic problem and you should wash on bread and recite HAMOTZI on the bread and only then eat the Matzoh Brei.
- (c) Challah Kugel, Bread Pudding or Stuffing (that is made from bread) - MEZONOT. By the way, if you're eating stuffed turkey on Thanksgiving you'd make a Mezonot, eat some stuffing and only then make a Shehakol and eat some of the turkey - more on that later.
- (d) Matzoh Balls -MEZONOT
- (e) French Toast - the Halacha is very similar to Matzoh Brei. French toast as it is typically made and eaten would certainly be HAMOTZI and require washing and Birchat Hamazon as would a normal slice of bread. It would only be Mezonot if the pieces are smaller than a Kzayit and they have been deep fried.
- (f) Croutons* - this isn't mentioned in the TorahLive slides but it's important to note it here as it is very practical. Packaged salad croutons sold in grocery stores (like the ones produced by Osem for example) are made from bread but the bread had been baked especially to be made into croutons. They are therefore MEZONOT. However, homemade croutons made from leftover bread that was baked to be bread and was only made into croutons after the fact would require a HAMOTZI. (As per a recent inquiry, the homemade croutons sold at Shalom Kosher are made from bread and fall under this category). *Note: even when they are Hamotzi, bread in crouton form no longer retains the ability to exempt other foods eaten with it and a soup or salad eaten together with them would therefore require its own Bracha. Additionally, since we don't normally eat enough croutons (a Kzayit's worth) in a short enough amount of time (k'dei achilat pras), no Bentching would be required. If, however, you sat down and snacked on a large amount of Hamotzi croutons and you ate*

them very quickly, you would be required to Bentch. Again, please find something better to eat!

2. The speaking notes are also under the orange "Teacher Material" tab. Open and download the "Instructors Guide" and scroll down to page 64 to the section entitled "Hamotzee and Mezonot." The topic goes through page 85. This section walks you through the graphics in the classroom presentation and has suggested speaking notes. Obviously, you want to prepare this material in advance rather than reading off of the computer screen in class but it's quite detailed and pretty much explains each graphic in the classroom presentation that you'll actually be using to teach from.