**YESHIVAT HAR ETZION**

**ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)**

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**THE LAWS OF THE BERAKHOT**

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<http://vbm-torah.org/archive/blessings/48berakhot.htm>

**Shiur #48: *Berakha Acharona***

***Kedei Akhilat Peras* – Foods and Liquids**

**Introduction**

In the previous *shiurim*, we discussed the laws of the *berakha acharona*. We learned that one only says a *berakha acharona* (*Al Ha-Michya*, *Borei Nefashot*) after eating a *ke-zayit* of food. We dedicated the previous two *shiurim* to the study of the size and measurement of a *ke-zayit*.

In addition to the food’s volume, the *Posekim* assume that one must eat the food within a certain time-frame, a *shi’ur*. This week, we will discuss the time in which one must eat a *ke-zayit* of food in order to become obligated to say a *berakha acharona*. In addition, we will discuss whether there are any differences between food and drink with regard to these questions.

**Food: *Kedei Akhilat Peras***

The Talmud teaches in numerous contexts that in order to violate certain prohibitions or in order to fulfill certain *mitzvot* that require “*akhila*” (eating), one must eat a specific amount (*shi’ur*), most often a *ke-zayit* (the size of an olive), in a certain amount of time. This amount of time is generally referred to “*kedei akhilat peras*,” the amount of time it takes to eat half a loaf of bread. This amount of time is relevant in the context of eating prohibited foods (see *Keritut* 12b), as well as when fulfilling *mitzvot*, such as *matza* (*Berakhot* 37b) and *marror* (*Pesachim* 114b). This amount of time is also relevant in the context of eating of Yom Kippur as well (see Tosefta, *Yoma* 4:3), although the *shi’ur* of eating on Yom Kippur is a *ka-kotevet* (the size of a date).

Interestingly, the *Acharonim* (see, for example, Magen Avraham 210:1, Panim Me’irot 2:27) question whether this *shi’ur* should apply to *Birkat Ha-Mazon*. Some suggest that since *Birkat Ha-Mazon* is dependent upon “satisfaction” (*sevi’a*), as the verse states, “When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you” (*Devarim* 8:10), and not “eating,” even one who eats the minimum amount over a longer period than *kedei akhilat peras* should be required to say *Birkat Ha-Mazon*. This is not the accepted view.

The *Acharonim* (Magen Avraham, ibid.) assume that in order to be obligated to say a *berakha acharona*, one must eat a *ke-zayit* of food within *kedei akhilat peras*. How much time is “the time it takes to eat a half a loaf of bread”?

The *Rishonim*, based upon a different opinions among the *Tanna’im* (see *Eiruvin* 82b), debate the size of a *peras*. In various contexts, the Rambam (*Hilkhot Eiruvin* 1:9; *Shevitat He-Asor* 2:4; *Ma’akhalot Asurot* 14:8, etc.) rules that a loaf is the size of six eggs; thus, half a loaf, a *peras*, is the size of 3 eggs (3 *ke-beitzim*). One must therefore eat a *ke-zayit* in the time period it takes to eat 3 *ke-beitzim*. Rashi (*Pesachim* 44a) disagrees and rules that a loaf is the equivalent of 8 eggs, and a *peras* is therefore the size of 4 eggs (4 *ke-beitzim*). Accordingly, one has somewhat longer to eat the *ke-zayit* – the time it takes to eat 4 *ke-beitzim*.

The Shulchan Arukh (OC 378:3, 612:4) cites both views. Some (Shulchan Arukh Ha-Rav 612:4, cited by Mishna Berura 412:8) suggest adopting the more stringent approach regarding laws of Biblical origin. Similarly, due to the principle of *safek berakhot le-hakel*, one should adopt the shorter measurement regarding *berakha acharona* and only recite the blessing if he completed the *ke-zayit* in the shorter amount of time.

The *Acharonim* offer different estimates for the time it takes to consume a *peras*. The Chatam Sofer (6:16), for example, suggests that this may be as long as nine minutes. The Sedei Chemed (Asifat Dinim, *Akhila* 3) cites opinions that maintain that *kedei akhilat peras* is eight minutes. The Bikurei Ya’akov (639:13) writes that *kedei akhilat peras* is an eighth of an hour, or 7 ½ minutes. Arukh Ha-Shulchan (202:8) estimates this time to be between three to four minutes. The Kaf Ha-Chaim (210:8) rules that *kedei akhilat peras* is 4 minutes. (Interestingly, the Minchat Chinukh [313:5] objects to determining set measurements of time, as each food must be estimated separately.)

Regarding eating *matza*,R. Ovadia Yosef (*Yechave Da’at*) rules that one should preferably follow the view of four minutes. R. Moshe Feinstein (*Iggerot Moshe*, OC 4:41) accepts the views of the Marcheshet (1:14:8), who estimates *kedei akhilat peras* to be about three minutes.

Given that most *Posekim* accept a smaller measurement of a *ke-zayit*, ranging from 3-4 cc – 17 cc, it is generally not difficult to consume a *ke-zayit* of food within a few minutes, and to thus become obligated in a *berakha acharona*.

Of course, while reliance on the longer measure is a leniency regarding *berakha acharona*, regarding eating on Yom Kippur, it is relied on as a stringency. A *choleh* (sick person) is often instructed to eat or drink small amounts, known as “*shi’urim*,” in the course of a *kedei akhilat peras*. Many will insist that a *choleh* should wait up to nine minutes between *shi’urim*, in accordance with the Chatam Sofer cited above. Others adopt more lenient opinions, and one who must eat should thus consult with a halakhic authority before Yom Kippur.

**The Time Measurement for Drinking**

As we mentioned in a previous *shi’ur*, one must say a *berakha acharona*, *Borei Nefashot*, after drinking a significant amount of liquid. After drinking a *shi’ur* of wine, one says *Al Ha-Gefen*.

The *Rishonim* debate whether the *shi’ur* for liquids is the same as the *shi’ur* for food, i.e. a *ke-zayit*. Tosafot (*Berakhot* 39a and *Yoma* 79a) suggest that the *shi’ur* may be the same as for food, a *ke-zayit*. The Rambam (*Hilkhot Berakhot* 1:2) rules that one only says a *Borei Nefashot* after drinking a *revi’it*, which is the amount of liquid displaced by one and a half eggs. The Rosh (*Berakhot* 6:24), and subsequently the Shulchan Arukh (210:1), cites both views, and rules that one should preferably drink less than a *ke-zayit* or more than a *revi’it* in order to avoid a situation of doubt. It is customary to say a *berakha acharona* only after drinking a *revi’it* of liquid.

As we discussed previously, the *Acharonim* discuss the size of an egg, and accordingly, the volume of a *revi’it* (1.5 eggs). R. Chaim Naeh ruled that a *revi’it* is 86 cc (“*kos*” in *gematria*). Although the Noda Be-Yehuda, and subsequently the Chazon Ish, maintain that our eggs are smaller than the eggs of the ancient world, and a *revi’it* therefore should be measured as 150 cc (“*kos hagun*” in *gematria*), the accepted practice is in accordance with R. Chaim Naeh. [Some](http://www.hebrewbooks.org/pdfpager.aspx?req=49152&st=&pgnum=1&hilite=) suggest, based upon recent discoveries, that the size of a *revi’it* is actually 75 cc.

The Rambam writes concerning prohibited foods (*Hilkhot Shevitat He-Asor* 2:4; *Hilkhot Ma’akhalot Asurot* 14:9; *Hilkhot Terumot* 10:3) that regarding liquids, the *shi’ur* for being considered an act of drinking is “*kedei sheti’at revi’it*,” the amount it time in which one ordinarily drinks a *revi’it* of liquid. The Ra’avad (*Hilkhot Terumot*, ibid.) disagrees and rules that the *shi’ur* of *kedei achilat peras* applies to liquids as well. The Shulchan Arukh (212:10) rules in accordance with the Rambam. The Vilna Gaon rules in accordance with the Ra’avad.

The Magen Avraham (210:1) assumes that this debate applies to a *berakha acharona* as well. The Sha’ar Ha-Tziyun (210:11) explains that “*kedei sheti’at revi’it*” refers to “the manner in which people drink … in two sips.” R. Moshe Feinstein (Hagadat Kol Dodi, 3) adds that even one who drinks a *revi’it* in many sips, as long as he does not interrupt. Therefore, some *Posekim* note that one generally should not say a blessing after eating a bowl of soup, as a *revi’it* is not consumed within a few sips. Interestingly, other *Acharonim* suggest that even the Rambam would adopt the longer *shi’ur* regarding a *berakha acharona*, as the *berakha acharona* relates not just to the act of eating, but the *hana’ah* (benefit) as well.

Some *Acharonin* (see Taz 210:1 and 190:1) suggest that after drinking even a small amount of alcohol (scotch, vodka, etc.), one should say a *berakha acharona*. They explain that the *shi’ur* of *revi’it* should not apply to drinks that one ordinarily drinks in small amounts. Similarly, some *Acharonim* (see Maharsham 1:175) permit one to say the daytime Kiddush on less than a *revi’it* of liquor for this reason. The *Acharonim* (see, for example, Magen Avraham 194:4, Mishna Berura 190:14) reject this rationale and insist that one only says a *berakha acharona* after drinking a *revi’it*, regardless of the type of liquid.

Similarly, some suggest that the rules regarding hot beverages, such as tea and coffee, should be different. Some (see, for example, *Ginat Veradim*, OC 1:17) maintain that since it is customary to drink them slower, and this is the “*derekh hana’ato*”, even one who drank a *revi’it* of tea in more than *kedei sheti’at revi’it* should say the *berakha acharona*. Others suggest the opposite – liquids that one generally drinks slowly are completely exempt from a *berakha acharona* (see Sha’arei Teshuva 204:12; see also *Birkei Yosef* 204:6 and *Yabi’a Omer* 5:18:5), as this is not the normal manner of drinking.

R. Ovadia Yosef (*Yabi’a Omer*, OC 5:18) analyzes this issue in great depth and concludes that the custom if Sephardim is not to say a *berakha acharona* after drinking hot beverages unless one drinks a *revi’it* after it has cooled off (see below). On the other hand, R. Dovid Z. Hoffman, in his *Melamed Le-Ho’il* (OC 1:25), relates that his custom, as well as the custom of the Sho’el U-Meshiv and the Minchat Chinukh, was to say a blessing after drinking hot beverages. Similarly, the Maharam Shik (OC 85) records that this is his custom as well. The *Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilkhata* (vol. 2, ch. 44, n. 96) relates that this was also the practice of many great rabbis, including R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach.

Interestingly, R. Yedael Meltzer (Sefer Etz Ha-Chaim pg. 399, cited by R. Efraim Greenblatt in his [Rivevot Efraim OC 5:166](http://www.hebrewbooks.org/pagefeed/hebrewbooks_org_1086_156.pdf)) relates that his grandfather, [R. Isser Zalman Meltzer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isser_Zalman_Meltzer) (1870 – 1953), the author of the Even Ha-Ezel, was accustomed not to say a *berakha acharona* after drinking coffee, in accordance with the ruling of the Mishna Berura (see below). However, once R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach visited R. Meltzer, and noticed that he said the *berakha acharona* after drinking coffee. R. Auerbach, who was familiar with R. Meltzer’s practice, questioned the change in his custom. R. Meltzer responded that a few days earlier, [R. Yitzchak Ze’ev Soloveitchik](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yitzchok_Zev_Soloveitchik) (1886 - 1959) had visited, and he noticed that he said a berakha acharona after drinking coffee, and explained that this was in accordance with the practice of his father, R. Chaim Soloveitchik. R. Meltzer, himself a student of R. Soloveitchik in the Volozhin yeshiva, decided to change his practice. In turn, R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, impressed that R. Meltzer, even in his later years, would change his practice, also changed his custom, and began to say a *beracha acharona* after drinking coffee. R. Moshe Shternbuch (b. 1926), in his Teshuvot Ve-Hanhagot (2:135) also records that his teacher, R. Yitzchak Ze’ev Soloveitchik, would say a *berakha acharona* after drinking tea within the time of *kedei akhilat peras*.

The Mishna Berura (210:1) suggests that one should leave a *revi’it* of coffee or tea until it cools off and then drink a *revi’it*, in order to become obligated in the *berakaha acharona* according to (almost) all opinions.

Next week, we will finish our discussion of *berakaha acharona*.