

### Lesson 3-The Obligation To Recite 100 Brachos Each Day

Welcome to this session of Take 5 for Tefila, a program sponsored by the Orthodox Union, as part of their Tefila Education Initiative. In this session, we will discuss the obligation to recite 100 Brachos, 100 benedictions each day.

The obligation to recite 100 Brachos each day was considered such an important rule that many ancient Siddurim opened with a discussion of the rule. Here are the opening lines of the Siddur that Rashi, the great commentator of the 11th Century, compiled:

We Learned Rabbi Mayer said Each Jewish person is obligated to recite 100 Brachos each day, In the Jerusalem Talmud we learned There is no one among the Jews who does not fulfill 100 Mitzvos each day, As it is written in the book of Devarim chapter 10 verse 12: And now Israel, what does G-d, your G-d, ask of you. Do not read the Hebrew word: **מה** as meaning “what” as in the combination of the Hebrew letters: **ה, מ** but as an abbreviation of the Hebrew word: **מאה, מ, א, ה** which means 100.

Brachos which we have already described as the brick and mortar of Jewish prayer, were considered so important that our Sages viewed the recital of each one as the fulfillment of a Mitzvah and directed that we recite a minimum of 100 Brachos each day.

Is reciting 100 Brachos each day a difficult task to accomplish? Not if you recite the three prayers, Schacharis, Mincha and Maariv, the morning, afternoon and evening prayers every day. Let us calculate how you reach the goal of reciting 100 Brachos each day. Each time you recite Shemona Esrei, you are reciting 19 Brachos. Do that three times a day and you have already recited 57 Brachos or more than half of your daily requirement. Recite Birchos Haschachar, the morning Brachos that open Tefilas Shacharis and you have added 21 more. You are now up to 78 Brachos. Add Baruch Sh’Amar and Yishtabach that begin and close Pseukei D’Zimra and you have two more. The Brachos of Kriyas Shema in the morning provide three more and the Brachos of Kriyas Shema at night provide four more and some add a fifth. All told the three standard prayers each day provide you with the opportunity to recite at least 87 Brachos and some recite 88.

Assuming you eat three meals a day, you are adding at least three more Brachos before each meal and at least three more Brachos after each meal.. Should you recite Birkas Hamazone, the Grace After Meals after at least one meal each day, you are now up to 96 Brachos.

Recite Kriyas Shema Al Ha’Mita, the Kriyas Shema that is recited just before going to sleep and you have a total of 97 Brachos. That leaves you with three Brachos that you need to find on your own. May I suggest that you eat three snacks a day. Those snacks will not only satisfy your physical appetite but they will satisfy your spiritual hunger as well.

## *Take 5 for Tefila- The Tefila Education Initiative of the Orthodox Union*

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What about Shabbos? Since on Shabbos we do not recite a form of Shemona Esrei that has 19 Brachos, how do we reach 100 Brachos? Let us do some Shabbos math. On Shabbos each Shemona Esrei has seven Brachos. However we do add one additional prayer service, Tefilas Mussaf, the additional service after the Torah reading. Therefore just by reciting Shemona Esrei four times on Shabbos yields you 28 Brachos. Add the other Brachos of Tefilas Shacharis and Maariv and you have 31 more. You are now up to 59. On Shabbos, you make Kiddush twice, that yields three more. You wash at every meal and recite Hamotzei that provides you 6 more. At each of your three Shabbos meals you recite Birkas Hamazone. That gives you 12 more. In total your Shabbos meals provide you with 21 Brachos. You are now up to 80 Brachos.

Where will you find the rest of the Brachos that you need on Shabbos? How about Kriyas HaTorah? Each person who is called to the Torah recites one Bracha before the reading and one after. Answer Amen to each of those Brachos and you have found at least 16 more, seven aliyos and the maftir. You are now up to 96. Add the five Brachos of the Haftorah and you have reached your goal. You now have 101 Brachos.

Warning: If you choose to talk to your friends while each person who receives an aliya and who reads the Haftorah is reciting the Brachos, you are going to fall seriously behind in your goal of reciting 100 Brachos on Shabbos. You could make it up by eating 20 snacks. May I suggest that is an unhealthy way of satisfying your spiritual needs.

The issue of reaching 100 Brachos on Shabbos has led to some interesting customs. I myself have witnessed a Sephardic custom in which the Gabbai hands out mint leaves to those present after davening has been completed on Erev Shabbos. That provides an opportunity for those present to recite one additional Bracha, the Bracha of Boreh Minei Besamim.

There is hope for those who miss reciting Amen to the Brachos of Kriyas Ha'Torah. Some commentators view the song of Ain K'Elokeinu as consisting of 4 Brachos in each line. There is one catch, however. You are going to have to sing along.