דיני מאה ברכות

ס. חייב אדם לברך בכל יום מאה ברכות לפחות. [ש"ע סי' מו ס"ג]. והוא חיוב גמור. [פתח הדביר, הו"ד בהליכו"ע ח"א עמ' נט בהערה, וביבי"א ח"י סי' ז, ובחזו"ע שבת ח"ב עמ' שלח]. ורשאי להוסיף עליהם. [ראה חזו"ע שבת ח"ב עמ' שלח]

One Hundred Daily Blessings

Day 17

The obligation to recite 100

60) We are obligated to recite at least one hundred blessings each day. This is not simply a recommended practice, but it is an absolute obligation.[44] It is permissible to recite more than one hundred blessings in the course of a day.[45] Each person should keep track of the number of blessings he has recited during the day [on Shabbat and *Yom Tov*] in order to make sure that he reaches one hundred. Maran the Rishon Letziyon made sure to always be aware of the number of blessings he had recited

44. The wording of the *Shulḥan Arukh* leaves no room for doubt – the mitzvah of reciting 100 blessings every day is an absolute obligation. Nevertheless, Harav ḤIDA (*Maḥazik Berakha* #290) cited the passage of the Talmud (*Menaḥot* 43b): "On Shabbat and *Yom Tov*, Rav Ḥiya son of Rav Oya took the trouble to fill the quota [of blessings] through eating various fruits and treats," and commented that this implies that his practice was one of piety. Other people, apparently, did not bother to fill the quota on Shabbat because it is not an absolute obligation. The *Peṭaḥ Hadevir*, however, disagreed and insisted that it is an absolute obligation. He explained that the Talmud singles out the practice of Rav Ḥiya since he made sure to purchase expensive and rare fruits and delicacies in order to fill his quota of blessings, whereas other people made do with the simple, inexpensive foods that were easily available. The *Sede Ḥemed* (*ma'arekhet ḥet* #34) concurred with the *Peṭaḥ Hadevir*, and this is the ruling of Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Halikhot Olam* Vol. I, page 59).

In *Ḥazon Ovadya Shabbat* (Vol. II, page 339), Maran the Rishon Letziyon added that in reality Harav ḤIDA agreed that this is an obligatory mitzvah, but he wished to point out that most people fulfilled their obligation on Shabbat through listening to the blessings that others recited over the Torah reading and responding Amen to each one. This corresponds to the ruling of the Ga'on cited by the *Shibole Haleket* and other *Rishonim*, and it concurs with the *Arba'a Turim* and the *Shulḥan Arukh* (284:3). The Talmud singles out Rav Ḥiya bar Oya since he did not rely on this leniency, and instead made the extra effort to recite the 100 blessings himself.

45. Reciting more than 100 blessings in one day

The wording used by the *Shulḥan Arukh* suggests that there is nothing wrong with exceeding the number of daily blessings beyond one hundred. This is likewise the explicit ruling of Harav Menaḥem Azarya of Fano (responsa #39).

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Taba'at Hamelekh Hilkhot Tefilla* 7:14; *Ḥazon Ovadya Shabbat* Vol. II, page 338) demonstrated that the Ramba"n likewise ruled that it is permissible to recite more than 100 blessings, unlike the ruling of responsa *Pene Aharon* Amarilio (#7) that according to the Kabbalah one must recite exactly 100 blessings a day, no more and no less.

A careful examination of the *Pene Aharon*, however, reveals that this was not his intent. He meant only to explain why our Sages chose to institute a rule for reciting 100 blessings. Why not institute a rule to recite 99 blessings, or 101 blessings? If King David based this institution on the fact that exactly 100 people were dying of the plague each day, then we could ask why Heaven chose to take exactly 100 victims each day, and not 99 or 101? The *Pene Aharon* resolved this question based on kabbalistic teachings. He agreed, however, that it is permissible to recite more than 100 blessings each day.

וטוב למנות המאה ברכות בכל יום אחת לאחת, כדי שלא יפחות ממאה ברכות בכל יום. [מקבציאל וישב הל"ד].
וכן היה נוהג מרן הראשון לציון זצ"ל למנות בשבת את הברכות שבירך בפיו, להשלימן לחשבון מאה ברכות. [ראה יבי"א ח"י סי' ז]

סא. מפורש בדברי רבינו האר"י ז"ל (בשער רוח הקודש דף ד ע"א) וזה לשונו: "דע כי כ"ב אותיות אלפ"א בית"א הם תלויות במאה ברכות שהאדם מברך בכל יום, וכאשר אין האדם מברך כלל איזו ברכה מהם, תחסר ממנו אותה האות שאותה ברכה תלויה בה. ואם בירך אותה אלא שטעה בה, אז תהיה האות ההיא מצויה אמנם תהיה חסירה בעצמה, ואם בירך אותה כתקונה, אלא שלא נתכוון בה אז תהיה האות ההיא חשוכה ובלתי מאירה, עכ"ל. ומזה תבין כמה צריך האדם להשתדל במאה ברכות. [באי"ח וישב הי"ד, מקבציאל וישב הל"ד]

סב. חשבון המאה ברכות הקבועות בכל יום: ג' תפלות - נ"ז ברכות. ברכות שמע ערבית ושחרית: ז' ברכות. ברכות השחר והתורה - כ"א ברכות. ברכות טלית ותפילין - ב' ברכות. ברוך שאמר וישתבח - ב' ברכות. וברכת "המפיל" לפני השינה. שתי סעודות ביום - ט"ז ברכות (בכל סעודה: נטילת

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so far [on each of those days] in order to make sure that he would reach the desired number.[46]

Spiritual need for 100 daily blessings

61) The Arizal taught that the twenty-two letters of the *alef-bet* correspond to the hundred blessings that each person recites every day. If someone fails to recite the daily quota of blessings on a particular day, he becomes disconnected from the corresponding letter or letters. If he recites a blessing with errors, the corresponding letter will be deformed. If he recites it correctly but fails to concentrate on the meaning of its words, the corresponding letter will be devoid of its spiritual energy. Therefore, it is crucial for each person to strive to fulfill this mitzvah in the ideal manner.

Automatic program for ordinary weekdays

62) On a regular weekday, we recite the *Amida* three times. Since the *Amida* consists of nineteen blessings, this already gives us 57 blessings for the day. We recite three blessings for the morning *Shema* and four blessings for the evening *Shema*, bringing us to 64. We recite 21 morning blessings, plus one for putting on the tallit and another for putting on tefillin. Thus, we recite 87 blessings on a normal day simply by fulfilling our daily prayer requirements. We also recite the blessings of *Barukh she'amar*

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46. This practice is mentioned by Rambam (*Hilkhot Tefilla* 7:16): "One should count each blessing until one reaches one hundred." The *Teshuvot Vehanhagot* (Vol. II, #129) testifies that Harav Yitzhak Zev Soloveichik likewise counted his blessings each day.

If One Cannot Manage One Hundred

On some days, such as Yom Kippur, it is almost impossible to recite one hundred blessings. Should everyone strive to recite as many blessings as possible in such a situation? Perhaps it doesn't matter since he will not reach one hundred in any case, and seventy blessings are no better than sixty blessings. See the discussion in *Bar Almogim* by Harav Avraham Genichovsky.

ידים, המוציא, וברכת המזון, וכוס של ברכת המזון). סך הכל ק"ו ברכות, שהם יותר ממאה ברכות. וזה מלבד מה שאדם מברך עוד במשך היום, על אכילה ושתיה, ועל מה שנפנה לצרכיו, ועוד. [ראה בית יוסף סי' מו אות ג]

סג. אף הנשים חייבות לברך מאה ברכות בכל יום. [הליכו"ע ח"א עמ' נט]

and *Yishtabah*, and the blessing of *Hamapil* before going to sleep, bringing the number up to 90. Assuming that we eat two bread meals, we go over the top with another 16 blessings. This is because in each meal we recite the blessing for the mitzvah of *netillat yadayim*, the blessing of *hamotzi*, four blessings of *Birkat Hamazon*, and a blessing before and after the cup of wine gracing *Birkat Hamazon*. Besides this, each person normally snacks and drinks several times a day, and he uses a restroom several times.

Women are also obligated

63) Men and women[47] are equally obligated to recite 100 blessings each day.

47. The Opinion that Woman Are Exempt

The responsa *Shevet Halevi* (Vol. V, #23) ruled that women are exempt from the obligation to recite 100 blessings each day. He derived this from the fact that the *Bet Yosef* counted the blessings on the tallit and tefillin as part of the 100 daily blessings, and he did not find it necessary to give any substitute on behalf of women even though they do not recite those blessings. Likewise, Harav Shelomo Zalman Auerbach (*Halikhot Shelomo Tefilla* page 272) ruled that women are exempt from this mitzvah since the list of the daily hundred blessings includes the blessings of the *Shema* and the *Amida* recited three times, and women are exempt from these blessings. Although it is possible for women to make up the number with alternate blessings over food and beverages, that is not a choice on fast days. Therefore, logic dictates that women are not obligated to recite the daily one hundred blessings. The responsa *Rivevot Efrayim* (Vol. III, #47) concurred with this ruling.

The *Teshuvot Vehanhagot* (Vol. II, #129) forwarded the logic that our Sages set up our prayers and blessings in such a manner that automatically enables a person to fulfill his daily obligation of one hundred blessings. It should not be necessary for people to search for excuses to recite a hundred blessings every single day. Since women do not have such an automatic system, it must be that women are exempt from the mitzvah of reciting one hundred blessings each day. The *Teshuvot Vehanhagot* (Vol. II, #129) added that women must be exempt from this mitzvah since it is in the category of mitzvot that are governed by time, being that each day presents a new obligation. The *Halakha Berura* (page 347) refuted this argument.

The Opinion that Woman Are Obligated

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Halikhot Olam* Vol. I, page 59) disagreed with the aforementioned *Aharonim*, pointing out that Maran listed the daily 100 blessings in his *Kesef Mishne* (*Hilkhot Tefilla* 7:14) without the blessings over the tallit and tefillin. Although women are exempt from the *arvit* prayer, this should not lead us to the conclusion that women are exempt from the obligation to recite 100 blessings. If a woman chooses not to recite *arvit*, she will have to make up the number of blessings in another way. Harav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv likewise ruled that women are equally obligated in this mitzvah.

Practically speaking, it is admittedly quite difficult for a woman to fulfill this mitzvah. Sefardic women may not recite the seven blessings of the *Shema*, nor may they recite the blessings of *Barukh she'amar* and *Yishtabah*. Furthermore, a woman is obligated to recite the *Amida* only once a day.

So how is a woman supposed to fulfill this mitzvah? The most practical solution is for her to recite the *Amida* three times a day although she technically does not have to recite it more than once. This will bring her much closer to the goal of 100 blessings. If she figures out another solution, she may fulfill it another way. In any case, a woman must expend considerable effort if she wishes to fulfill this mitzvah.