



Averaged over a typical day, one bracha is said every 10 minutes.

by Rabbi Shraga Simmons



Having learned to say the brachot properly, it's now time for the finale – the special mitzvah to say 100 brachot each day.

Before learning how to reach that magic number 100, let's first examine the two main reasons given for saying 100 brachot each day:

1) In Deuteronomy 10:12, Moses tells the Jewish people: "What (*mah*) does God ask of you?" The Talmud¹ explains that the word *mah* can be read as *me'ah*, meaning 100. In other words, God asks us to recite (at least) 100 brachot every day.²

2) In the time of King David, 100 people died every day due to a terrible plague. Realizing that the plague had a spiritual cause, King David and the Sages instituted a "measure for measure" response: the saying of 100 blessings each day. Once implemented, the plague stopped.³

¹ Menachot 43b

² Orach Chaim 46:3

With 100 brachot spread out over a typical 16-hour day, on average one bracha is said every 10 minutes. As mentioned in class #39, the Sages cite the gematria (numerical value) of the letter *koof* in the word “tzaddik” (righteous person) for the idea of saying 100 brachot each day.⁴ The 100 brachot provide meditative moments of appreciation that lead to a life of righteousness.

Now let’s get down to brass tacks and figure out exactly how to reach the total of 100 blessings.⁵ Note that the count of 100 brachot starts in the evening, just as the new Jewish day begins at sunset.⁶

WEEKDAYS

On a regular weekday, you can come close to 100 brachot by praying the three daily services:

Number of Brachot	Name of Brachot	
4	Ma’ariv: blessings of Shema	EVENING
19	Ma’ariv: Amidah	
1	Hamapil (bedtime blessing)	
2	Tefillin	MORNING
1	Al Netilat Yadayim	
2	Asher Yatzar/Elokai Neshama	
2	Birkat HaTorah	
1	Tzitzit/Tallit	
15	Birchot HaShachar	
2	Pesukei D’Zimrah	
3	Shacharit: blessings of Shema	
19	Shacharit: Amidah	
19	Mincha: Amidah	
90	TOTAL *	

** Exceptions: Sefardim count one less blessing for Tefillin.*

³ Midash Rabba – Numbers 18:17; Tur 46, quoting Rav Netrunoi Gaon

⁴ Remah M’Pano 109, citing Sefer HaTikkunim

⁵ Information provided by Rabbi Asher Resnick, as a merit for the soul of Ruchama Rivka bas Asher Zevulun, a very special girl who passed away from leukemia at age 14.

⁶ Genesis 1:5; Talmud – Brachot 2a; Mishnah Berurah 46:14

Women do not wear Tefillin and Tzitzit.

These obligatory brachot get us up to 90 each weekday. The following “non-obligatory” brachot help reach the goal of 100:

- brachot before food
- brachot after food
- Asher Yatzar after using the bathroom (aside from the one already counted in the morning)

SHABBAT

On Shabbat, things are a bit different, since each Amidah has only seven brachot, as opposed to 19 on a weekday. On the other hand, there is Musaf plus three obligatory Shabbat meals, which include the extra brachot of Kiddush (at the first two meals), *Netilat Yadayim*, Hamotzee, and Birkat Hamazon.

Number of Brachot	Name of Brachot	
4	Ma'ariv: blessings of Shema	EVENING
7	Ma'ariv: Amidah	
2	Kiddush	
2	Netilat Yadayim / Hamotzee	
4	Birkat Hamazon	
1	Hamapil	
1	Al Netilat Yadayim	MORNING
2	Asher Yatzar/Elokai Neshama	
2	Birkat HaTorah	
1	Tzitzit/Tallit	
15	Birchot HaShachar	
2	Pesukei D'Zimrah	
3	Shacharit: blessings of Shema	
7	Shacharit: Amidah	
7	Mussaf: Amidah	
1	Kiddush	
2	Netilat Yadayim / Hamotzee	

4	Birkat Hamazon	
7	Mincha: Amidah	AFTERNOON
2	Netilat Yadayim / Hamotzee	
4	Birkat Hamazon	
80	TOTAL	

This leaves us quite short. Besides the bracha of Asher Yatzar, here are two methods for reaching 100 brachot on Shabbat:

- During the Torah reading and Haftorah, listen carefully to every blessing, have intention to fulfill your obligation, and answer “amen.”⁷ This provides an additional **20 brachot**. However, this method is not foolproof, since the one saying the brachot must also have in mind to be *motzi* the listeners.
- During the recitation of *Ein Kelocheinu*, intend that each of the phrases will count as a bracha.⁸ This provides an additional **21 brachot**.

A story is told about the Brisker Rav,⁹ who was once a guest in someone's home. On Shabbat afternoon he asked his host for some fruit, but he didn't eat it. Shabbat ended and still the fruit remained uneaten. The Brisker Rav explained: He initially requested the fruit because he was missing two blessings from the required 100 – which the *bracha rishona* and *achrona* on the fruit would have covered. However, during the afternoon service in shul, he was called up to the Torah where he recited two blessings: one before the Torah reading and one after.¹⁰

OTHER HOLIDAYS

Other holidays essentially follow the pattern of Shabbat, with the following adjustments:

Reductions to the count include:

- less obligatory meals than Shabbat
- less aliyot for the Torah reading than Shabbat

Additions to the count include:

⁷ Mishnah Berurah 46:14

⁸ Kol Bo 37

⁹ Rabbi Yitzhak Ze'ev Soloveitchik (1886-1959, Poland and Jerusalem)

¹⁰ www.ohr.edu

- the recitation of She’hecheyanu and Hallel (on most holidays)
- brachot on special mitzvot (e.g. lulav, matzah, shofar, megillah)

Optional brachot to increase the count include:

- Asher Yatzar (aside from the one already counted in the morning)
- other foods eaten as snacks
- the smelling of fragrant spices¹¹

YOM KIPPUR

Due to the prohibition of eating (and the shorter Amidah), Yom Kippur is perhaps the most difficult day of the year to reach 100 brachot. The obligatory count is as follows:

Number of Brachot	Name of Brachot		
1	She’hecheyanu	EVENING	
4	Ma’ariv: blessings of Shema		
7	Ma’ariv: Amidah		
1	Hamapil		
1	Al Netilat Yadayim	MORNING	
2	Asher Yatzar/Elokai Neshama		
2	Birkat HaTorah		
1	Tzitzit/Tallit		
15	Birchot HaShachar		
2	Pesukei D’Zimrah		
3	Shacharit: blessings of Shema		
7	Shacharit: Amidah		
7	Mussaf: Amidah		
7	Mincha: Amidah		AFTERNOON
7	Ne’ilah: Amidah		
67	TOTAL		

¹¹ Mishnah Berurah 46:14; blessings for fragrant spices were discussed in class #41

That leaves us 33 short. In this case, it is essential to count an additional 29 brachot by hearing every blessing of the Torah reading and Haftorah, while intending to fulfill your obligation, and answering “amen.”

Additional brachot to complete the count are Asher Yatzar (aside from the one already counted in the morning), and the smelling of fragrant spices.¹² If necessary, other praises in the Yom Kippur prayers can also be counted.¹³

In the merit of being careful say 100 brachot every day, may we be considered to have fulfilled the directive to “fear God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, and to serve God, and to guard His mitzvot.”¹⁴

¹² Mishnah Berurah 46:14

¹³ Mishnah Berurah 622:5

¹⁴ Tz'ror HaMor (early Acharon) – Parshat Ekev 10