



Blessings Abound

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E31)

100 Daily Opportunities – and how to take advantage of them

Reciting 100 Brochos each day

The Gemara,¹ cites R' Meir who teaches that we are obligated to recite 100 Brochos each day. He supports this assertion with a play on the word in the Pasuk² which says: וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ. שְׂאֵל מְעַמְךָ. The word מה means 'what' as in *what* does Hashem ask of you. However, the word מה can be read as מאה – a hundred. On a weekday, one would easily reach that mark as we recite 57 Brochos in the three Amidos alone. However, continues the Gemara, on שבת ויו"ט, one should 'fill in' Brochos (each Amidah on שבת ויו"ט has seven fewer Brochos than on a weekday). We will discuss how later.

Dovid Hamelech and the 100 Brochos

The דוד המלך ע"ה³ comments that דוד instituted the practice of reciting מאה ברכות. There was a plague and 100 Jews were dying each day. He saw Hashem's intervention as a call to strengthen our acknowledgement and gratitude to ה' for that which He showers on us. The plague ended and his תקנה took hold.

The Zohar: לך לך = 100

The Zohar⁴ clues us into the significance of these 100 Brochos. The departure of אאע"ה from

his parental/ancestral home is the first step towards the creation of כלל ישראל. His first step, teaches the Zohar, echoes the first step of a new Neshama as it leaves its Heavenly abode and comes down into this world. ה' makes the נשמה take an oath of loyalty to serve Him throughout his lifetime. In doing so, ה' gives the נשמה 100 keys with which to succeed: the 100 daily Brochos. This is alluded to in the Gematria of לך לך which equals 100. Each Brocha is an opportunity to connect our fleeting physical world to the eternal spiritual world and is thereby a key to our spiritual success.

*You recite a
Brocha to eat
an apple; I eat
an apple to
recite a Brocha.*

Connecting with the Source

A central aspect of this spiritual 'key' is the reminder that everything in our world has but one Source. That fact is easy to forget. We go about our day thinking that 'this' (whatever we are looking at) caused 'that' and doing 'this' will bring about a 'known' outcome. It is very easy to forget that the only 'this' that causes every 'that' is the Will of הקב"ה, the Source of everything that ever was, is, or will be.

Indeed, asserts ר' בחיי (in ברכה – ברכה), the word בְּרִיכָה itself derives from the word בְּרִיכָה – a wellspring. When we say the word ברוך we are at one time offering both praise and prayer,

¹ מנחות מג :

² דברים י: יב

³ On the above דברים י: יב in פסוק

⁴ פ' לך לך אות יד



KI HEIM CHAYEINU

כי הם חיינו



Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

acknowledging ה' as the Source of blessing and praying that the blessing continue. (You may have noticed that in the supplemental תפילה for פרנסה which is printed in many סידורים in שמע עלנו, we request that Hashem's bounty be showered on us from the בְּרִיכָה עֲלֵינוּ – the Heavenly wellspring.)

Increasing our awareness - continually

A question that is asked by many is why do we need to request anything of ה', Who knows our needs better even than we do? R' Simcha Wasserman זצ"ל pointed out to me that R' Aharon Kotler זצ"ל addresses this question.⁵ He says that we need to strengthen our awareness that everything comes from ה'. Everyone needs help in humbling oneself before ה'.

Nothing is more humbling than dependence. And nothing brings out our sense of absolute dependence better than a meaning-filled ברכה.

R' Aharon Karliner and I both recite ברכות

One of the first stories I heard from Rav Sholom Schwadron זצ"ל in my parents' home on Friday night was how R' Aharon Karliner recited, and then explained, his Brocha. At the Rebbe's Tisch R' Aharon recited a Brocha over an apple and the Chasidim, inspired, sought to partake of a bit of that apple. A boy in attendance could not understand why they were making a fuss over R' Aharon's Brocha and the apple. After all, he also makes a Brocha over an apple and nobody rushes to join with his Brocha nor his apple.

Sensing the boy's question, R' Aharon explained the significance of his Brocha. The Rebbe related that when he wakes up in the morning, he sees anew Hashem's magnificent and wondrous בריאה. He feels deeply moved to recite a Brocha to humbly acknowledge his awareness of Hashem's creation. "However," the Rebbe added, "I cannot just recite a Brocha over my thoughts and feelings; that would be a ברכה לבטלה. Instead, my feelings of awe and gratitude well up and inspire my davening, growing stronger with each moment. Those intense feelings spring out when I finally can hold an apple and recite a Brocha. I am eating the apple to give expression to my feelings. On the other hand, you wake up and look forward to eating an apple. And since you know the הלכות, you wait until after you have davened. And then you do not eat the apple without first reciting a Brocha. You recite the Brocha to eat an apple; I eat an apple to recite a Brocha."

The 'holy' apple

The Gemara⁶ raises a contradiction between two פסוקים. One פסוק states that everything on earth is Hashem's – לה' הארץ ומלואה. Another פסוק states that the Heavens are Hashem's but the Earth He gave to mankind – השמים שמים לה' והארץ נתן לבני אדם. The Gemara resolves the apparent contradiction by saying that one פסוק speaks before one recites a Brocha while another is after one recites a Brocha.

The simple reading of the Gemara's answer is that everything on Earth belongs to Hashem

⁵ משנת רב אהרן – תפילה חלק א' עמ' צב

⁶ ברכות לה.



KI HEIM
CHAYEINU
כי הם חינו



Discover the Joy
of Shabbos

until one recites a Brocha after which Hashem gives the Earth to mankind.

Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik זצ"ל took note of the fact that the Gemara does not identify which פסוק is before the ברכה and which is after. It simply says לפני הברכה כאן לאחר הברכה כאן. He therefore suggested that the Gemara could be understood as describing the apple that one is eating. It is an earthy, lowly apple before one recites a Brocha over it. It is nothing but ארץ. However, when a person has recited a ברכה, the apple is transformed. It is now a holy apple which carries קדושה. The world has now been infused with Hashem's presence; it is His.

Shabbos and the Brisker Rav

As mentioned, one has to be more conscious on שבת if one is to recite 100 Brochos. It is told that the Brisker Rav asked his host if he could provide him with an apple and a banana. The host went to bring those items, surprised as he was over the request, while the Brisker Rav went to Mincha. When he returned, he thanked his host for supplying the apple and the banana but said that he no longer needed them since he was honored with an Aliyah (לוי, of course) at Mincha. He was only seeking to 'fill in' to reach 100 Brochos. (Those who are inclined can analyze why just the apple *or* the banana with

Takeaway: I will try to increase my consciousness of reciting 100 Brochos daily, including on שבת.

would not have sufficed to supply the two missing Brochos.)

Creative ways to reach 100 on Shabbos

A full Oneg שלום/זכר/שבת/Kiddush could include מזונות, העץ, האדמה, שהכל, על המחיה, בורא נפשות. That yields 6 (night and day is 12). Using the bathroom over Shabbos will generally yield 3-4 additional Brochos (16). Two drinks of water (2 each) can readily supply the missing 20 ברכות.

However, there are other, more creative ways to reach 100.⁷ One is by smelling fragrances. Another is by listening to the 16 Brochos recited by those who go up for Aliyos (7 Aliyos plus Maftir) with intent to be יוצא with those Brochos as well. Five additional Brochos can be gained from the הפטרה. The Mishna Berura cites the אין כאלקינו מחזור ויטרי who holds that each part of אין כאלקינו is also a Brocha and can provide 12 Brochos (note that the words מי, אין, and נודה make up the acrostic of אמ"ן.) Indeed, the רמ"א explains that we need not recite אין כאלקינו on Yom Kippur because we have 'enough' Brochos, unlike שבת.

Crowns on the ק

The בעל הטורים refers twice to the crowns or תגין on the letter ק which refer to the 100 ברכות that one is meant to recite every day.^{8 9}

⁷ There are two excellent books on the subject, one by Rav Mordechai Potash מצות מאה ברכות כהלכתה and one by Rav Eitan Shoshan בריית איתן. These suggestions are discussed by Rav Shoshan.

⁸ בעל הטורים על דברים ד, ו: ד

⁹ Our ספרי תורה do not have crowns on a ק. The references led me to discover the ספר תגין, in which copied the Torah as it appeared on the stones that erected when Klal Yisrael crossed the river into ארץ ישראל. These תגין appear there.