

Part 2: 100 Brachos: The Nature of the Obligation

Introduction – part 2

The exact nature of the obligation to recite 100 brachos a day is actually a difference of opinion. While our relating of the origin certainly indicates that it is a rabbinic enactment, there are those who believe it to be a Torah obligation (perhaps a *halacha l'Moshe miSinai* – a law that was communicated orally to Moses at Sinai. Such laws, while unrecorded in the Torah, have the force of Biblical law). Some maintain that one need only participate in 100 brachos a day (such as by listening and answering amen to the brachos of others) and that actually reciting 100 brachos a day oneself is merely meritorious. It's evident from Maimonides' introduction to his *Sefer HaMitzvos* that some earlier compilers even included reciting 100 brachos a day among the 613 mitzvos! (Maimonides himself maintains that it is clearly a rabbinic institution.)

Given the array of opinions as to the law's exact origin and the nature of its obligation, it ought not surprise us that there are also many differences of opinion as to the exact parameters of fulfilling one's daily 100 brachos. Among these questions:

1. Are women obligated? (This question is addressed more thoroughly in our fifth installment of this series.)
2. When does a day start for the purpose of this obligation – at sunset or dawn? (Most authorities maintain that the obligation begins at night. There is also an opinion that one only has the daylight hours to fulfill the obligation.)
3. Does answering a zimmun for bentsching count as a bracha towards one's daily obligation?
4. May one contrive a situation that requires him to recite a bracha he otherwise would not be required to recite (*bracha sh'eino tzricha*) for the purpose of reciting 100 brachos?
5. When reciting a bracha, must one have in mind the intention that it count as one of his 100 daily brachos?
6. If one starts Shabbos early, do his Friday afternoon brachos count for Friday or for Shabbos? Similarly, if one bentsches for Shalosh Seudos after Shabbos has ended, do the brachos count for Shabbos or for Sunday?

For these and similar questions, it is advisable that one consult one's own rabbi or halachic advisor.