

אגוד מוסדות לחינוך תורני
CONSORTIUM of
JEWISH DAY SCHOOLS

קריאת שמע וברכותיה

יוצר אור



PUTTING THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE

Before reciting שמע קריאת שמע we recite ברכות קריאת שמע. Why?



ברכות יא.

בשחר מברך שתיים לפניה ואחת לאחריה. ובערב מברך שתיים לפניה ושתיים לאחריה.

In the morning one recites two blessings beforehand and one afterward. And in the evening one recites two blessings beforehand and two afterward.

קריאת שמע ברכות (ברכות ב) תוספות throughout the day – three in the morning, and four in the evening – based on the פסוק in (קייט:קסד) תהלים:

שבע ביום הללתיך על משפטי צדקך:

Seven times a day I praise You for Your righteous laws.



THINK ABOUT IT

Why do you think the פסוק refers to praising ה' seven times a day?
What is special about the number seven? Can you think of other times that the number seven is significant in the תורה? How many examples can you think of?

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There are several kinds of ברכות. Some are ברכות המצוה, recited before doing a מצוה. Others are ברכות הנהנין, ones recited before deriving pleasure. Others are ברכות השבח, recited to give praise to ה'.

Can you give examples of each?

ברכות השבח	ברכות הנהנין	ברכות המצוה

What kind of ברכה do you think the ברכות קריאת שמע are? Why?

!אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וצונו לקרא את שמע

Additionally, the ברכות themselves don't make mention of קריאת שמע. The name ברכות קריאת שמע is slightly misleading as they are not ברכות recited as ברכות המצוה on קריאת שמע but rather they are ברכות השבח that חז"ל instituted to be recited around קריאת שמע.

We will see that together with שמע these ברכות highlight some of the main foundations of our belief. Reciting them together every day is a powerful declaration and reminder of what we believe. It is therefore very important to understand each one.

Let's start by thinking about what are the most fundamental things that we believe? What must every Jew believe to be true? What are the main principles of our faith? Write a few below:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

If you were teaching someone about what Jews believe where would you start? What idea would you teach first? Why?

The first of the ברכות קריאת שמע starts from the beginning by praising ה' for creating the world.

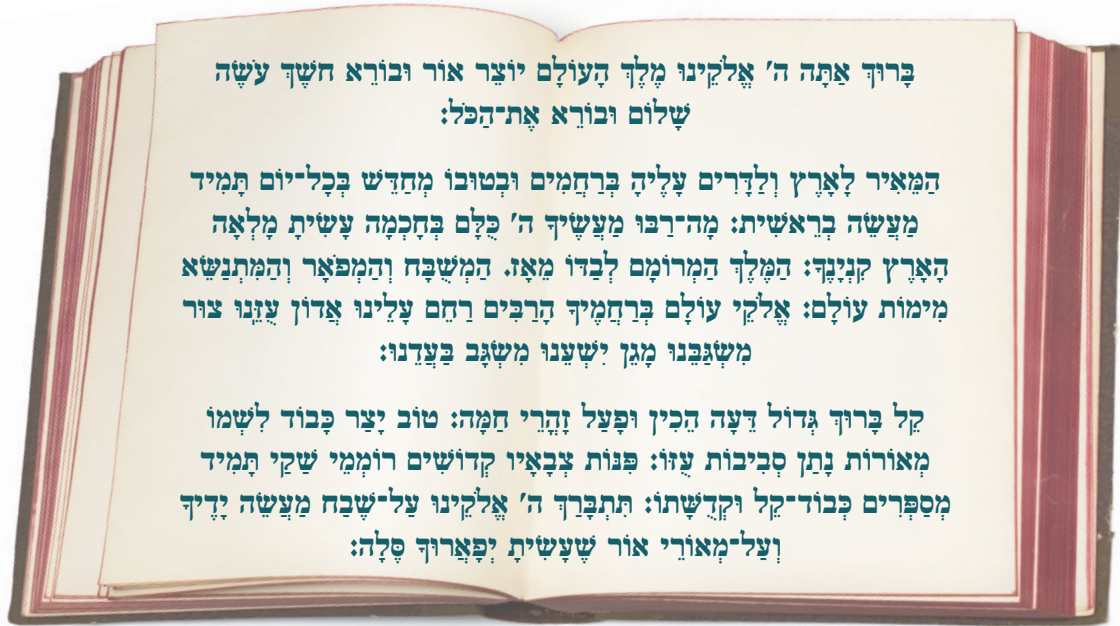


DID YOU KNOW?

One should not speak or interrupt during the ברכות קריאת שמע. One may stand or sit for שמע and its ברכות. One should not stand if they were already sitting (שולחן ערוך סג:א). Nevertheless, Rav Schwab writes that it is customary to sit to demonstrate that the עמידה is specifically standing.



MAKING IT MEANINGFUL



If you were describing the creation of the world what would you include?
What are the main things that 'ה created?



Look at the ברכה above. What creation of 'ה seems
to be the focus?

Why do you think that is?

יוצר אור ובורא חשך עשה שלום ובורא את-הכל



1. The Gemara comments on the ברכה's focus on the creation of both light and darkness even though we say it during the daytime:



ברכות יא:

"יוצר אור ובורא חשך". לימא "יוצר אור ובורא נוגה"? ... אלא אמר רבא: כדי להזכיר מדת יום בלילה ומדת לילה ביום.

"Who forms light and creates darkness." Let us say, "Who forms light and creates brightness?"... Rather, Rava said it is in order to mention the attribute of day at night and the attribute of night during the day.

Why do you think it is important to mention both day and night during the daytime and nighttime?

explains that it is to make sure that we do not think that one god controls the day and one god controls the night. Rather, we must believe that there is one ה' in control of the day, night, and everything!



THINK ABOUT IT

Do you ever think that 'ה' is obviously in control of some things but forget that 'ה' is in charge of all things?

What things do you always recognize are in 'ה's control?

What things do you sometimes forget?

What can you do to remember that 'ה' is in control of everything?

2. The ברכה's focus on the creation of light and darkness is patterned after a פסוק in (מה:ז):



ישעיהו (מה:ז):

יוצר אור ובורא חֶשֶׁךְ, עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם ובורא רָע; אֲנִי ה', עֹשֶׂה כָּל-אֵלֶּה.

[I] form light and create darkness, [I] make peace and create evil; I Hashem, do all of these things.

Look at the ברכה above. What words does the ברכה have differently than the פסוק?

Why do you think we make that change?
