

V

BAVLI BERAKHOT CHAPTER FIVE

FOLIOS 30B-34B

5:1

- A. One rises to recite “The Prayer” only in a solemn frame of mind.
 - B. The pious men of old used to tarry one hour before praying,
 - C. so that they could direct their hearts to their father in heaven.
 - D. [If one was praying], even if the king greets him, he may not respond.
 - E. And even if a serpent is entwined around his heel, he may not interrupt [his prayer].
- I.1** A. *Whence [in Scripture] do we find evidence for this rule [of M. 5:1A]?*
- B. *Said R. Eleazar, “It is in line with the following verse of Scripture: ‘And she was in bitterness of soul’ (1Sa. 1:10).”*
 - C. *But how does that verse prove the point? Perhaps the case of Hannah is different, because her heart was unusually bitter.*
 - D. *Rather, said R. Yosé b. R. Hanina, “It derives from this verse: ‘But as for me, in the abundance of your loving kindness will I come into your house, I will bow down toward your holy temple in fear of you’ (Psa. 5: 8).”*
 - E. *But how does that verse prove the point? Perhaps the case of David is different, for in praying he troubled himself more than [most people].*
 - F. *Rather, said R. Joshua b. Levi, “It derives from this verse: ‘Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness’ (Psa. 29: 2). Do not read the word used for beauty as its vowels indicate, but rather, impose the vowels to give the meaning of ‘trembling.’”*
 - G. *But how does that verse prove the point? Perhaps I should read the cited word literally, as “beauty.”*
 - H. *This would be in line with the practice of R. Judah, who would dress up elegantly and only then would say the Prayer.*

- I. *Rather, said R. Nahman bar Isaac, "It derives from this verse: 'Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling' (Psa. 2:11). [That proves the point of M. 5:1A]."*
- J. *What is the sense of "rejoice with trembling"?*
- K. *Said R. Adda bar Matena said Rabbah, "Where there is rejoicing, there should also be trembling."*
- I.2** A. *Abbaye was in session before Rabbah. He saw someone making merry. He said to him, "'Rejoice with trembling' is what is written."*
- B. *The other said to him, "I put on phylacteries."*
- I.3** A. *R. Jeremiah was in session before R. Zira. He saw that he was making merry. He said to him, "'In all sorrow there is profit' (Pro. 14:23)."*
- B. *He said to him, "I put on phylacteries."*
- I.4** A. *Mar, son of Rabina, made a celebration for the marriage of his son. He saw that the rabbis were making merry.*
- B. **[31A]** *He brought a cup worth four hundred zuz and broke it before them. They were upset.*
- I.5** A. *R. Ashi made a celebration for the marriage of his son. He saw the rabbis making jokes.*
- B. *He brought a cup of white crystal and broke it. They were upset.*
- I.6** A. *Rabbis said to R. Hammuna, the younger, at the wedding feast of Mar, son of Rabina, "May the master sing for us."*
- B. *He said to them, "'Woe for us, for we are going to die, woe for us, for we are going to die.'"*
- C. *They said to him, "What are we supposed to respond to these verses of yours?"*
- D. *He said to them, "'Where is the Torah-learning, where is the merit for doing a religious duty! That will protect us!'"*
- I.7** A. *Said R. Yohanan in the name of R. Simeon b. Yohai, "It is forbidden for a person to fill his mouth with laughter in this world, for it is said, 'Then [in time to come] laughter will fill our mouths and song our tongues' (Psa. 126: 2).*
- B. *"When? At the time that 'the gentiles will say, 'The Lord has done great things with these'" (Psa. 126: 3)."*
- C. *They said concerning R. Simeon b. Laqish that, from the time that he heard this teaching from R. Yohanan, his master, he never again allowed laughter to fill his mouth.*
- I.8** A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*
- B. *People should not arise to say the Prayer either forthwith after judging a case or after discussing a matter of law, but after having dealt with a decided law.*
- C. *What is an example of having a decided law?*
- D. *Said Abbaye, "It would, for example, accord with that which R. Zira said."*
- E. *For R. Zira said, "Israelite women imposed a strict rule on themselves. If they produce a drop of blood as small as a mustard seed, they refrain from having sexual relations on its account until seven clean days [on which no further blood appeared] have passed."*

- F. *Raba said, "It would be illustrated by the statement of R. Hoshaia."*
- G. For R. Hoshaia said, "A farmer may practice deception with the crop [and avoid rendering it liable to the separation of tithes] by bringing it into the barn while the grain is still in the chaff [and so not yet liable to the separation of tithe]. Then his beast may eat the produce [as is, while it is yet] exempt from tithing."
- H. *If you wish, I may propose that the same matter is illustrated by the statement of R. Huna.*
- I. For R. Huna said R. Zeira said, "He who lets blood in the case of a beast that has been set aside for sacred purposes — the blood may not be used for private benefit, and the laws of sacrilege apply to the blood."

I.9 A. *Rabbis in practice accord with the law of the Mishnah-passage at hand [M. 5:1A].*

B. *R. Ashi in practice accords with the law of the Tannaite teaching [I.8B]*

I.10 A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. **People should not rise to say the Prayer from a moment of sadness or idleness, laughter or babbling or silliness or idle talk, but only out of rejoicing at the fulfillment of a religious duty.**
- C. **And along these same lines, a person should not take leave of his fellow from a moment of babbling or laughter or silliness or idle talk, but only out of discourse on a matter of law.**
- D. **For so we note that the earlier prophets concluded their teachings with words of praise and consolation [T. Ber. 3:21P-C].**
- E. *And so did Mari, son of the son of R. Huna b. R. Jeremiah bar Abba, teach on Tannaite authority, "A person should take leave of his fellow only out of discourse on a matter of law. For on that account one will remember him."*
- F. *It is illustrated by the case of R. Kahana. He accompanied R. Shimi bar Ashi from the head of the canal to the palm-district of Babylonia. When he got there, he said to him, "Master is it so that people say that these palm-trees of Babylonia have been since the time of the first man to the present?"*
- G. *He said to him, "You remind me of what R. Yosé b. R. Hanina said. For R. Yosé b. R. Hanina said, 'What is the meaning of the verse, "Through a land that no man passed through and where no man dwelled" (Jer. 2: 6)? And if no one passed through, how would someone have dwelled there anyhow? But his meaning is this: Any land which the first man decreed should be settled was settled, and any land which the first man decreed should not be settled has never been settled.'"*
- H. *R. Mordecai accompanied R. Shimi bar Ashi from Hageronia to Be Kipi, and some say, to Be Dura.*

I.11 A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. **He who recites the Prayer must concentrate his heart on Heaven [cf. M. Ber. 5:1].**

- C. Abba Saul says, “A [Scriptural] allusion to prayer [and its requisite act of concentration] is, Thou wilt strengthen their heart, thou wilt incline thine ear (Psa. 10:17)” [T. **Ber. 3:4E-F**].

I.12 A. *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. Said R. Judah, “This was R. Aqiba’s custom. When [R. Aqiba] would pray with the congregation [in public], he would shorten [the prayer] and go up [from the reader’s pit] on account of excessively burdening the community.
- C. “And when he would pray by himself, one would leave him in one corner [of the room] and find him [later] in another corner.
- D. “Why so? On account of his [repeated] bowing and prostration [during his lengthy prayer]” [cf. M. **Ber. 4:3**] [T. **Ber. 3:5A-C**].

I.13 A. Said R. Hiyya bar Abba, “A person should always recite the Prayer in a room in which there are windows.

- B. “For it is said, ‘Now his windows were open’ (Dan. 6:11).”

I.14 A. [In T.’s version] May one think that he may pray continuously all day long? [Scripture specifies to the contrary] in the case of Daniel, [And he got down upon his knees] three times a day [and prayed and gave thanks before his God...] (Dan. 6:11 [RSV: 6:10]) lest one think that he may pray facing any direction he wishes, Scripture states [to the contrary], He had windows in his upper chamber open towards Jerusalem (ibid.).]

- B. May one think [that Daniel prayed only] when he came to the [lands of the] dispersion? Scripture states [to the contrary], As he had done previously (ibid.).
- C. May one think that he must pray out loud? Scripture specifies [to the contrary] in the case of Hannah, as it says, Hannah was speaking in her heart (1Sa. 1:13).
- D. May one think that he may recite all [the three daily Prayers] at one time? Scripture specifies [to the contrary] in the case of David, as it says, Evening and morning and noon I utter my complaint and moan (Psa. 55:18 [= RSV 55:17]):
- E. [B. omits:] evening — this is the evening Prayer; morning — this is the morning Prayer; noon — this is the afternoon Prayer.
- F. May one think that he may present his petition and [then immediately] recite the Prayer? Scripture specifies [to the contrary] of Solomon, as it says, [Yet have regard to the prayer of thy servant and to his supplication, O Lord my God] hearkening to the cry and to the prayer [which thy servant prays before thee this day] (1Ki 8:28):
- G. the cry — this is the cry [of praise and rejoicing which must accompany petitionary prayer], [B. lacks:] as it says, Rejoice in the Lord O ye righteous! Praise befits the upright (Psa. 33: 1);
- H. prayer — this is petition.
- I. One does not utter words [of private petition and supplication] after “True and firm” [the benediction recited after the Shema, immediately before

reciting the Prayer], but he may utter words [of petition] after [reciting] the Prayer [cf. M. Ber. 2:2, T. Ber. 1:2C],

- J. even if the petition is as [long as] the order of the confession on the Day of Atonement.

I.15 A. *It has been stated as well on Amoraic authority:*

- B. Said R. Hiyya bar Ashi said Rab, “Even though authorities have stated, ‘A person should ask for what he needs in the benediction ending, “Who hears prayer,”’
C. “if one comes to state [those needs] after he has recited the Prayer, even [if the petition is long] as the order of confession on the Day of Atonement, he may do so.”

The Prayer of Hannah and What We Learn Therefrom

I.16 A. *Said R. Hamnuna, “How many important laws concerning prayer are there to be derived from the verses of Scripture stated in connection with Hannah.*

- B. “‘Now Hannah spoke from her heart’ (1Sa. 1:10). On the basis of this verse [we learn] that one who recites the Prayer has to direct his heart [to Heaven].
C. “‘Only her lips moved.’ On the basis of this verse [we learn] that one who recites the Prayer must mouth the words.
D. “‘But her voice could not be heard.’ On the basis of this verse [we learn] that it is forbidden to raise one’s voice when he recites the Prayer.
E. “‘Therefore Eli thought she was drunk.’ On the basis of this verse [we learn] that one who is drunk may not recite the Prayer.”
F. “‘And Eli said to her, How long will you be drunk’ (1Sa. 1:14):
G. Said R. Eleazar, “On the basis of this verse [we learn] that one who observes something improper in his fellow **[31B]** has the obligation to reprove him.”

I.17 A. “‘And Hannah answered and said, No my lord’ (1Sa. 1:15).

- B. Said Ulla, and some say R. Yosé b. R. Hanina, “She said to him, ‘You are not a lord in this matter, and the holy spirit does not rest on you, that you should suspect me of doing such a thing.’”
C. *There are those who say that this is what she said to him: “You are not a lord. The Presence of God and the holy spirit are not with you, for you have judged me without charity and did not judge me charitably. Do you not know that ‘I am a woman of sorrowful spirit, I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink.’”*
D. Said R. Eleazar, “On the basis of this passage [we learn] that one who is suspect of something that he has not done has to inform [the other that the accusation is false].”

I.18 A. “‘Count not your handmaid for a daughter of Belial:”

- B. Said R. Eleazar, “On the basis of this passage [we learn] that a drunkard who says a prayer is like one who worships an idol.
C. “‘Here it is written, ‘Count not your handmaid for a daughter of Belial’ and elsewhere: ‘Certain sons of Belial have gone forth from the midst of you’ (Deu. 13:14).
D. “‘Just as in that latter passage the reference is to idolatry, so here it is to idolatry.’”

I.19 A. “‘Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace’ (1Sa. 1:17):

- B. Said R. Eleazar, "On the basis of this passage [we learn that] one who suspects his fellow of something which in fact is not true has to appease him and not only so, but he also has to bless him.
- C. "For it is said, 'And the God of Israel grant your petition' (1Sa. 1:17)."

I.20 A. "And she vowed a vow and said, O Lord of hosts" (1Sa. 1:11):

- B. Said R. Eleazar, "From the day on which the Holy One, blessed be he, created his world, no one ever called the Holy One, blessed be he, 'hosts,' until Hannah came along and called him 'hosts.'
- C. "Hannah said before the Holy One, blessed be he, 'Lord of the world, among all the hosts of hosts which you have created in your world, is it such a hard thing in your sight to give me a single son?'"
- D. "To what may the matter be compared? To the case of a mortal king who made a banquet for his staff. A poor man came and stood at the door. He said to them, 'Give me a piece of bread.' But the people paid no attention to him.
- E. "He pushed his way in and went before the king. He said to him, 'My lord, O King, in this entire banquet which you have prepared, is it such a hard thing in your sight to give me a single piece of bread?'"
- F. "If you will indeed look" (1Sa. 1:11):
- G. Said R. Eleazar, "Said Hannah before the Holy One, blessed be he, 'Lord of the world, If you see, well and good. If you will not see, then I shall go and be alone [with another man] in the full knowledge of Elkanah, my husband. And since I shall go aside with another man, they will make me drink the water inflicted on the suspected wife. Now you are not going to falsify your own Torah, for it is said, "She shall be cleared and shall conceive seed" (Num. 5:28).'"
- H. *That tale accords well with the view of him who has said, "If the wife was barren, she will be remembered [and will conceive]."* [Hannah would then conceive in consequence of her surviving the rite of the bitter water.]
- I. *But in the view of him who said, "If formerly the accused wife had born children in pain, she will bear easily, if she had born females, she will bear males, if she had born dark-skinned children, she will bear light skinned ones, if she had born short ones, she will bear tall ones," what can one say? [Now there is no provision for the pregnancy of the formerly barren wife who has been vindicated.]*
 - J. *For it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
 - K. "'She shall be cleared and shall conceive seed' (Num. 5:28), so that if she had been barren, she will be remembered," the words of R. Ishmael.
 - L. Said to him R. Aqiba, "If so, all barren women will go and go aside with a strange man, and the one who did not actually do anything wrong will then be remembered [and become pregnant with her husband]. Rather, the cited passage teachings that if formerly the accused wife had born females, she will bear males, if she had born dark-skinned children, she will bear light skinned ones, if she had born short ones, she will bear tall ones, if she had born only one at a time, she will bear two at a time."
 - M. What then is the sense of "If you will indeed look"?
 - N. The Torah used commonplace language [and did not mean to provide the basis for any exegesis at all].

- I.21 A.** “If you will indeed look on the affliction of your handmaid and will not forget your handmaid but will give to your handmaid...” (1Sa. 1:11).
- B. Said R. Yosé b. R. Hanina, “What is the sense of these three references to ‘handmaid’?”
- C. “Hannah said before the Holy One, blessed be he, ‘Lord of the world, there are three criteria which you have created in a woman, by which one may become liable to the death penalty, and some say, three armor joints [Simon] [at which a woman is vulnerable], and these are they: the matter of avoiding sexual relations when one is menstruating, the matter of separating the dough-offering, and the matter of kindling the Sabbath lamp. Have I violated any one of these?’”

I.22 A. “But will you give your handmaid a seed for a male” (1Sa. 1:12):

- B. *What is the sense of “seed for a male”?*
- C. Said Rab, “A man among men.”
- D. Said Samuel, “Seed that will anoint two men, and who are they? Saul and David.”
- E. And R. Yohanan said, “Seed that is worth two other men, and who are they? Moses and Aaron.
- F. “For it is said, ‘Moses and Aaron are among his priests, and Samuel among those who call upon his name’ (Psa. 99: 6).”
- G. And rabbis say, “Seed that will be assimilated among other men [and not be conspicuous].”
- H. When R. Dimi came, he said, “Not tall or short, not thin nor fat, not pale nor ruddy, not too smart nor too dumb.”

I.23 A. “I am the woman that stood by you here” (1Sa. 1:26):

- B. Said R. Joshua b. Levi, “On the basis of that verse [we learn] that it is forbidden to sit within four cubits of [someone who is reciting] the Prayer.”

I.24 A. “For this child I prayed” (1Sa. 1:27):

- B. Said R. Eleazar, “Samuel taught law in the presence of his master. For it is said, ‘And when the bullock was slain, the child was brought to Eli’ (1Sa. 1:25). Is it because ‘when the bullock was slain’ that ‘the child was brought to Eli’?”
- C. “Rather, this is the sense of the matter.
- D. “Eli said to them, ‘Call a priest and bring him to slaughter the beast.’
- E. *“Samuel saw that they were looking for a priest to slaughter the beast. He said to them, ‘Why are you looking for a priest to slaughter the beast? An act of slaughter that is done by a non-priest is valid just as well.’*
- F. *“They brought him to Eli, who said to him, ‘How do you know this?’*
- G. *“He said to him, ‘Is it written, “And the priest will slaughter”? What is written is: ‘The priests shall offer up the blood’ (Lev. 1: 5). The point is that from the moment of receiving the blood onward, the religious duty is to be carried out by the priesthood. On the basis of this exegesis, we learn that the act of slaughter is valid even when done by a non-priest.’*
- H. *“He said to him, ‘You have made a perfectly valid statement. But at the same time you are teaching a matter of law in the presence of your master, and whoever teaches a matter of law before his master is liable to the death-penalty.’*

- I. “Hannah came and cried out before him, ‘I am the woman that stood by you here.’
- J. *“He said to her, ‘Let me punish him and I shall pray for you and a greater son than this one will be given to you.’*
- K. “She said to him, ‘For this particular child I prayed.’”

I.25 A. “Now Hannah spoke upon her heart” (1Sa. 1:13):

- B. Said R. Eleazar in the name of R. Yosé b. Zimra, “She spoke concerning matters upon her heart before him: ‘Lord of the world, whatever you created in woman you have not created purposelessly. You created eyes to see, ears to hear, a nose to smell, a mouth to speak, hands to do work, feet for walking, breasts for suckling. These breasts that you have placed upon my heart are for what? Are they not for suckling? Give me a son so that I may give suck with them.’”
- C. And R. Eleazar said in the name of R. Yosé b. Zimra, “For whoever keeps a fast on the Sabbath they tear up a decree of seventy years standing.
- D. “And even so, they go back and exact it from him on account of his failure to rejoice in the Sabbath.”
 - E. *What is his remedy?*
 - F. *Said R. Nahman bar Isaac, “Let him fast on account of the fast [that he kept on the Sabbath].”*

I.26 A. And R. Eleazar said, “Hannah spoke insolently against the heights.

- B. “For it is said, ‘And Hannah prayed against the Lord’ (1Sa. 1:10).
- C. “This indicates that she spoke insolently against the heights [of God].”
- D. And R. Eleazar said, “Elijah spoke insolently against the heights, as it says, ‘For you turned their heart backwards’ (1Ki. 18:37).”
- E. Said R. Samuel bar R. Isaac, “How do we know that the Holy One, blessed be he, went and conceded that Elijah was right?
- F. **[32A]** As it is written, ‘And whom I have wronged’ (Mic. 4: 6).”

Thematic Appendix on Insolence toward Heaven with Special Reference to Moses

I.27 A. Said R. Hama b. R. Hanina, “Were it not for these three verses of Scripture [Simon, p. 195, n. 6: which show that God is responsible for the evil impulse], the feet of (the enemies of) Israel should be moved [for Israel would bear the blame for its sinfulness].

- B. “One: ‘Whom I have wronged’ (Mic. 4: 6).
- C. “The second: ‘Behold as the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, house of Israel’ (Jer. 18: 6).
- D. “The third: ‘I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh’ (Eze. 36:26).
- E. *R. Papa said, “The matter derives from here: ‘And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes’ (Exo. 36:27). [So God causes one thing or the other.]”*

I.28 A. And R. Eleazar said, “Moses spoke insolently toward the height [God], as it is said, ‘And Moses prayed to the Lord’ (Num. 11: 2).

- B. “Do not read ‘to the Lord’ but [shifting a letter] ‘against the Lord.’”

- C. For so in the house of R. Eliezer b. Jacob people pronounce the letter alef as an ayin and an ayin as an alef [both silently]. [That explains B.]
- D. *The house of R. Yannai say, "Proof [that it was God's fault] derives from the following: 'And enough gold' (Deu. 1: 1)."*
- E. *What is the meaning of "enough gold"?*
- F. *They say in the house of R. Yannai, "This is what Moses said before the Holy One, blessed be he, 'Lord of the age, it was on account of the silver and gold that you lavished upon Israel until they said, "Enough," that caused them to make the golden calf.'"*
- G. *They say in the house of R. Yannai, "A lion roars not over a basket of straw but over a basket of meat."*
- H. Said R. Oshaia, "The matter may be compared to the case of a man who had a cow that was thin but had good limbs. [To fatten it] he fed it lupines, and it bucked.
- I. "He said to it, 'What made you buck against me? It was only the lupines that I fed you.'"
- J. Said R. Hiyya bar Abba said R. Yohanan, "The matter may be compared to the case of a man who had a son. He washed him, anointed him, gave him food and drink, and hung a purse around his neck and sat him at the door of a whorehouse. What could the son do so as not to sin?"
- K. *Said R. Aha son of R. Huna said R. Sheshet, "That is in line with what people say: 'Full stomach, bad impulse,' as it is said, 'When they were fed, they became full, they were filled and their heart was exalted, therefore they have forgotten me' (Hos. 13: 6)."*
- L. R. Nahman said, "Proof derives from the following: 'Then your heart was lifted up and you forgot the Lord' (Deu. 8:14)."
- M. *Rabbis say, "Proof derives from the following: 'And they shall have eaten their fill and gotten fat and turned to other gods' (Deu. 31:20)."*
- N. *If you prefer, I can derive proof from the following: "But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked" (Deu. 32:15).*
- O. Said R. Samuel bar Nahmani said R. Jonathan, "How do we know that the Holy One, blessed be he, retracted and conceded that Moses was right?
- P. "As it is said, 'And [I] multiplied to her silver and gold which they used for Baal' (Hos. 2:10)."

I.29 A. "And the Lord spoke to Moses, Go, get you down" (Exo. 32: 7):

- B. What is the meaning of "Go, get you down"?
- C. Said R. Eleazar, "Said the Holy One, blessed be he, to Moses, 'Moses, go down from your position of greatness. Have I made you great for any reason other than for Israel? Now that Israel have sinned, what do I need you for?'
- D. "Forthwith Moses grew weak and did not have the power to speak.
- E. "When he said to him, 'Let me alone that I may destroy them' (Deu. 9:14), Moses thought, 'This matter now depends on me.'
- F. "Forthwith he stood and become strong in prayer and sought mercy.

- G. “The matter may be compared to the case of a king who grew angry with his son and was giving him hard blows. The king’s friend was sitting before him, afraid to say anything to him. The king said, ‘Were my friend not here, sitting before me, I should have killed him.’”
- H. “The other realized, ‘This matter depends on me.’ Forthwith he stood up and saved [the son].”

I.30 A. “Now therefore let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them and that I may consume them, and I will make of you a great nation” (Exo. 32:10):

- B. Said R. Abbahu, “Were it not a verse of Scripture fully spelled it, it would never have been possible to make such a statement.
- C. “The verse teaches that Moses seized the Holy One, blessed be he, like a man who grabs his friend by his garment.
- D. “He said to him, ‘Lord of the world, I shall not let you go until you forgive and pardon them.’”

I.31 A. “And I will make of you a great nation” (Exo. 32:10):

- B. Said R. Eleazar, “Said Moses before the Holy One, blessed be he, ‘Lord of the age, ‘Now if a stool with three legs cannot stand against you when you are angry, a stool with only one leg [that is, Moses] surely should not be able to stand!
- C. “‘Not only so, but I have to be ashamed before my forefathers, for now they will say, ‘See how the provider whom he set up over them seeks greatness for himself and does not seek mercy for them!’”

I.32 A. “And Moses besought the Lord his God” (Exo. 32:11):

- B. Said R. Eleazar, “This verse teaches that Moses stood in prayer before the Holy One, blessed be he, until he had exhausted him.”
- C. And Rab said, “It was until he had released him from his vow.
- D. “Here it is written, ‘He besought,’ and [in connection with vows], he shall not break his word’ [using the same verb] (Num. 30: 3).
- E. “And a master has said, ‘He cannot break the vow, but others may break the vow for him.’ [Moses thus released God’s vow.]”
- F. And Samuel said, “This verse teaches that he gave himself up to death in their behalf.
- G. “For it is said, ‘And if not, blot me, I pray you, out of the book which you have written’ (Exo. 32:32).”
- H. Raba said in the name of R. Isaac, “This verse teaches that he made the attribute of mercy rest on them.”
- I. And rabbis say, “This verse teaches that Moses said before the Holy One, blessed be he, ‘Lord of the age, it would be perfectly common of you to do such a thing.’”
- J. “And Moses besought the Lord” (Exo. 32:11):
- K. *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- L. R. Eliezer the elder says, “This verse teaches that Moses stood in prayer before the Holy One, blessed be he, until he was seized by a fever.”

- M. *What is this fever?*
- N. Said R. Eleazar, "It is a burning in the bones."
- O. *What is a "burning in the bones"?*
- P. Said Abbayye, "A fire in the bones."

I.33 A. "Remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by yourself" (Exo. 32:13):

- B. *What is the meaning of "by yourself"?*
- C. Said R. Eleazar, "Said Moses before the Holy One, blessed be he, 'Lord of the age, Had you taken the oath to them by heaven and earth, I might have said that just as heaven and earth shall be null, so your oath will be null. But now that you have taken your oath by your great name, just as your great name lives and endures forever and ever, so your oath endures forever and ever.'"

I.34 A. "And said to them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven and all this land of which I have spoken" (Exo. 32:13):

- B. This expression, "Of which I have spoken" should be "of which you have spoken"!
- C. Said R. Eleazar, "Up to this point we have the words of the disciple [Moses]. From this point forward we have the words of the master [God]."
- D. And R. Samuel bar Nahman said, "Both clauses are the words of the disciple. But this is what Moses said before the Holy One, blessed be he, 'Lord of the world, As to the words that you have spoken to me, telling me to go and say them to the Israelites in my name, indeed I did go and speak to them in your name. Now what shall I say to them.'"

I.35 A. "Because the Lord was not able" (Num. 14:16):

- B. *[Since the word for "able" is given in the feminine form, it is asked,] Should not the word be given in the masculine form?*
- C. Said R. Eleazar, "Said Moses before the Holy One, blessed be he, 'Lord of the age, now the nations of the world will say that his strength has become weak like a woman's, so he cannot save [them].'"
- D. "Said the Holy One, blessed be he, to Moses, 'But did they not already see the miracles and mighty deeds which I did for them at the sea?'"
- E. "He said to him, 'Lord of the age, But they still can say, "Against a single king he can stand, but against thirty-one kings he cannot stand.'"
- F. Said R. Yohanan, "How do we know that the Holy One, blessed be he, retracted and conceded that Moses was right?"
- G. "As it is said, 'And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to your word' (Exo. 32:20)."
- H. *On Tannaite authority in the house of R. Ishmael:* "In accord with your word' (Exo. 32:20):
- I. "The nations of the world are going to say this: 'Happy is the disciple with whom his master concurs.'"

I.36 A. “But in very deed, as I live” (Exo. 32:21):

B. Said Raba said R. Isaac, “This teaches that the Holy One, blessed be he, said to Moses, ‘Moses, you have given me life through your words.’”

I.37 A. R. Simlai expounded, “A person should always lay out words of praise for the Holy One, blessed be he, first of all, and then he should say the Prayer.

B. “How do we know it?

C. “It is from Moses, for it is written, ‘And I besought the Lord at that time’ (Deu. 3:23).

D. “And then it says, ‘O Lord God, you have begun to show your servant your greatness and your strong hand, for what god is there in heaven and earth who can do according to your deeds and according to your mighty acts.’ And then it is written, ‘Let me go over, I pray you, and see the good land’ (Deu. 3:23ff.).”

Thematic Composite on How to Pray; the Value of Prayer; and Other Liturgical Topics

I.38 A. [32B] Said R. Eleazar, “Prayer is more important than good deeds.

B. “For you have no one who excelled in good deeds more than Moses, our master.

C. “Even so, he was answered only when he prayed.

D. “For it is said, ‘Speak no more to me’ (Deu. 3:26), and forthwith, ‘Get you up to the top of Pisgah’ (Exo. Deu. 3:27).”

E. And R. Eleazar said, “Fasting is more important than philanthropy.

F. “What is the reason?

G. “This is done with one’s body, while that, only with his money.”

H. And R. Eleazar said, “Prayer is more important than offerings,

I. “for it is said, ‘To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me’ (Isa. 1:11).

J. “And forthwith: ‘And when you spread forth your hands’ (Isa. 1:15). [Simon, p. 199, n. 6: Since spreading of hands is mentioned after sacrifice, it must be regarded as more efficacious.]”

K. Said R. Yohanan, “Any priest who has killed a person may not raise his hands.

L. “For it is said, ‘Your hands are full of blood’ (Isa. 1:15).”

I.39 A. And R. Eleazar said, “From the day on which the house of the sanctuary was destroyed, the gates of prayer have been locked.

B. “For it is said, ‘Yes, when I cry and call for help, he shuts out my prayer’ (Lam. 3: 8).

C. “But even though the gates of prayer are locked, the gates of tears are not locked.

D. “For it is said, ‘Hear my prayer, Lord, and give ear to my cry, keep not silence at my tears’ (Psa. 39:13).”

E. Raba did not decree a fast on a cloudy day, because it is said, ‘You have covered yourself with a cloud so that no prayer can pass through’ (Lam. 3:44).”

- I.40** A. And R. Eleazar said, "From the day on which the house of the sanctuary was destroyed, an iron wall came down to separate Israel and their father in heaven.
- B. "For it is said, 'And take you for yourself an iron griddle and set it for a wall of iron between you and the city' (Eze. 4: 3)."
- I.41** A. Said R. Hanin said R. Hanina, "Whoever takes a long time in reciting his Prayer [will find that] his prayer does not come back empty.
- B. "How do we know it? From the case of Moses, our master.
- C. "For it is said, 'And I prayed to the Lord' (Deu. 9:26) [Simon: This seems to be quoted in error, instead of 'And I fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights' (Deu. 9:18)].
- D. "And afterward it is written, 'And the Lord hearkened to me that time also' (Deu. 9:19)."
- E. Is this the case?
- F. And lo, said R. Hiyya bar Abba said R. Yohanan, "Whoever takes a long time in saying his Prayer and looks for the prayer to be fulfilled [will find that] in the end he comes to heartache.
- G. "For it is said, 'Hope deferred makes the heart sick' (Pro. 13:12)."
- H. *What is the remedy for such a person?*
- I. Let him engage in Torah-study, as it says, "But desire fulfilled is a tree of life" (Pro. 13:12).
- J. And the tree of life is nothing other than the Torah, as it says, "It is a tree of life to those that lay hold of it" (Pro. 3:18).
- K. *There is indeed no contradiction between the two statements [A, F]. The one speaks of a case in which one takes a long time in saying his prayer and looks for the prayer to be fulfilled, the other speaks of someone who takes a long time in saying his prayer but does not look for the prayer to be fulfilled.*
- L. Said R. Hama bar Hanina, "If a person should see that he says a prayer and is not answered, he should go back and say the prayer again.
- M. "For it is said, 'Wait for the Lord, be strong and let your heart take courage, yes, wait for the Lord' (Psa. 37:14)."
- I.42** A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*
- B. Four require strengthening, and these are they: study of Torah, practice of good deeds, praying, and doing one's daily work.
- C. How do we know that that is the case for Torah and good deeds?
- D. As it is said, "Only be strong and very courageous to observe to do according to all the Torah" (Jos. 1: 7).
- E. "Be strong" in Torah, and "be courageous" in good deeds.
- F. How do we know that that is the case for praying?
- G. As it is said, "Wait for the Lord, be strong and let your heart take courage, yes, wait for the Lord" (Psa. 37:14).
- H. How do we know that that is the case for one's work?
- I. As it is said, "Be of good courage and let us prove strong for our people" (2Sa. 10:12).

- I.43** A. “But Zion said, The Lord has forsaken me, and the Lord has forgotten me” (Isa. 49:14).
- B. Being forsaken is surely the same thing as being forgotten!
- C. Said R. Simeon b. Laqish, “Said the community of Israel before the Holy One, blessed be he,
- D. “‘Lord of the age, if a man takes a second wife after the first, he remembers the deeds of the first wife. But you have forsaken me and forgotten me.’
- E. “Said the Holy One, blessed be he, to her, ‘My daughter, I have created twelve constellations in the sky, and for each constellation, I have created thirty hosts, and for each host, thirty legions, and for each legion, thirty cohorts, and for each cohort, thirty maniples, and for each maniple, thirty camps, and to each camp I have attached three hundred sixty-five thousands of myriads of stars, matching the days of the solar year, and it is only for your sake that I created all of them. Yet you say, ‘You have forgotten men and forsaken me’!
- F. “‘Can a woman forsake her suckling child’ (Isa. 49:15)?
- G. “Said the Holy One, blessed be he, ‘Can I ever forget the burnt-offerings of rams and the firstborn of animals which you offered me in the wilderness?’
- H. “[The community of Israel] said, ‘Lord of the age, since there is no possibility of forgetfulness before the throne of your glory, can you then forget what I did with the golden calf?’
- I. “He said to her, ‘Yes, “these” will be forgotten’ [that is, the statement, “These are your gods”, Exo. 32:4].”
- J. “She said to him, ‘Lord of the age, since there is the possibility of forgetting before the throne of your glory, is it possible that you will forget what “I” did at Sinai?’
- K. “He said to her, ‘Yet the “I” [referring to ‘I am the Lord your God’ of Exo. 20:1] will not forget you’ (Isa. 49:15).”
- L. This is in line with what R. Eleazar said R. Oshaia said, “What is the meaning of the verse of Scripture, ‘Yes, “these” will be forgotten’ (Isa. 49:15)?
- M. “This refers to the sin of the golden calf.
- N. “‘But the “I” will not forget you’ (Isa. 49:15) —

II.1 A. The pious men of old used to tarry one hour before praying [M. 5:1B]:

- B. *What is the source for that rule?*
- C. Said R. Joshua b. Levi, “Said Scripture, ‘Happy are those who dwell in your house’ (Psa. 84: 5).”
- D. And said R. Joshua b. Levi, “He who says a prayer has to tarry an hour after he recites the Prayer, for it is said, ‘Surely the righteous shall give thanks to your name, the upright shall sit in your presence’ (Psa. 140:14).”
- E. *It has been taught on Tannaite authority along these same lines:*
- F. He who recites the Prayer has to tarry an hour before he recites the Prayer and an hour after he recites the Prayer.
- G. How do we know that one must do so before he recites the Prayer?
- H. As it is said, “Happy are those who dwell in your house” (Psa. 84: 5).
- I. How do we know that one must do so after he recites the Prayer?

- J. As it is said, “Surely the righteous shall give thanks to your name, the upright shall sit in your presence” (Psa. 140:14).

II.2 A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. The pious men of old would tarry for another hour, and then recite the Prayer for an hour, then they would go and tarry for another hour.
- C. But if they tarry for nine hours a day [in reciting the Prayer three times], what will become of their study of the Torah and how will their daily work be done?
- D. Since they are pious men, their study of Torah is protected and their daily work is blessed.

III.1 A. **If one was praying, even if the king greets him, he may not respond [M. 5:1D]:**

- B. Said R. Joseph, “That rule has been taught only with reference to Israelite kings, but as to gentile kings, one has to interrupt [and pay one’s respect to the gentile king].”
- C. *It was objected:*
- D. He who is reciting the Prayer and saw a thug coming toward him or a carriage coming toward him may not interrupt reciting the Prayer but abbreviates it and goes away.
- E. *There is no contradiction between the two rules. One speaks of a case in which it is possible to abbreviate the recitation, [the other in which it is not possible to do so].*

III.2 A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. There was the case of a pious man who was saying the Prayer on the road. An officer came and greeted him but he did not reply to him with a greeting. The officer waited until he had finished reciting his Prayer.
- C. After he had finished reciting his Prayer, he said to him, “Fool! Is it not written in your Torah, ‘Only take heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently’ (Deu. 4: 9), and it is written, ‘Take you therefore good care of your souls’ (Deu. 4:15). [So one has to protect his life, but you endangered yours.]
- D. “Now when I greeted you, why did you not greet me back? If I had cut off your head with a sword, who would have demanded recompense for your blood [since it would have been your own fault]?”
- E. He said to him, “Wait until I explain the matter to your satisfaction. If you were standing before a mortal king, and your friend had come and greeted you, would you have [33A] replied to him?”
- F. [The officer] said, “No.”
- G. “And if you had replied to him, what would they have done to you?”
- H. He said to him, “They would have cut off my head with a sword.”
- I. [The Israelite then] said to him, “Now is it not an argument a fortiori?
- J. “If you had been standing before a mortal king, who is here today and tomorrow in the grave, you would have behaved in such a way.
- K. “I, who was standing before the King of kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be he, who lives and endures for ever and ever, how much the more so [that I must concentrate on my petition to him and not break off to greet you].”

- L. The officer found the answer satisfactory, and the pious man went on to his home in peace.

IV.1 A. And even if a serpent is entwined around his heel [M. 5:1E]:

- B. Said R. Sheshet, "The law has been taught only with regard to a snake, but in the case of a scorpion, one may interrupt [the recitation of the Prayer]."
- C. *An objection was raised:*
- D. If a man fell into a den of lions, people may not [assume that he has died and] testify in his regard that he has died. But if he fell into a ditch filled with snakes or scorpions [people may assume that he has died] and give testimony concerning him that he has died. [Therefore the rule for snakes and scorpions should be the same.]
- E. *The cited case is different, since, because the man has fallen [on the snakes,] they go and bite him, [but otherwise they would not. Scorpions, by contrast, always bite.]*
- F. Said R. Isaac, "If one saw oxen [running toward him], he may interrupt the recitation of the Prayer]."
- G. *For R. Oshaia taught on Tannaite authority: "People should go a distance of fifty cubits from an ox that has not been known to gore, and as far as one can see from an ox that has been known to gore."*
- H. *It has been taught on Tannaite authority in the name of R. Meir, "If the head of the ox is in the fodder basket, climb up to the roof and kick away the ladder behind you."*
- I. *Said Samuel, "That rule applies to a black ox in Nisan, because, at that time, Satan dances between its horns."*

IV.2 A. Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:

- B. **There was the case concerning a certain place in which a lizard was going around and biting people. They came and told R. Hanina b. Dosa.**
- C. **He said to them, "Show me its hole."**
- D. **They showed him its hole. He put his heel over the mouth of the hole. The lizard came out and bit him and died.**
- E. **He took it on his shoulder and brought it to the school house. He said to them, "See, my sons, it is not the lizard that kills but sin that kills."**
- F. **At that moment they said, "Woe to the man who meets a lizard, and woe to the lizard that meets up with R. Hanina b. Dosa [cf. T. Ber. 3:20C-E].**

5:2

- A. **They mention the "power of the rain" in [the blessing concerning] "the resurrection of the dead," [the second blessing in the eighteen benedictions].**
- B. **And they ask for rain in the blessing of the years [the ninth blessing].**
- C. **And [they insert] Prayer of Division [habdalah, i.e., the blessing which marks the end of the Sabbath or festival] in [the blessing concluding] "who graciously gives knowledge," [the fourth blessing].**
- D. **R. Aqiba says, "One says it as a fourth blessing, by itself."**
- E. **R. Eliezer says, "[One says it] in the thanksgiving [the eighteenth blessing in the prayer]."**

I.1 A. They mention the “power of rain” [M. 5:2A]:

- B. *Why [is this benediction included in particular in the one for the resurrection for the dead]?*
- C. Said R. Joseph, “Because [rain] is equivalent to the resurrection of the dead, therefore [sages] gave it its place in the blessing for the resurrection of the dead.”

II.1 A. And they ask for rain in the blessing of the years [M. 5:2B]:

- B. *Why [is this benediction included in particular in the one for the blessing of the years]?*
- C. Said R. Joseph, “Because it concerns making a living, therefore [sages] gave it its place in the blessing concerning making a living.”

III.1 A. And they insert the Prayer of Division in the blessing concluding, “who graciously gives knowledge” [M. 5:2C]:

- B. *Why [is this benediction included in particular in the one having to do with knowledge]?*
- C. Said R. Joseph, “Because it concerns wisdom, so [sages] gave it its place in the blessing concerning wisdom.”
- D. And rabbis say, “Because it deals with an ordinary day, therefore [sages] gave it its place in a blessing having to do with an ordinary day.”

III.2 A. Said R. Ammi, “The importance of knowledge is indicated by the fact that it is given its place at the beginning of the first blessing [of the Prayer, beyond the obligatory opening three, said on all occasions] having to do with a weekday.”

- B. And R. Ammi said, “The greatness of knowledge is indicated by the fact that it is placed between two references to the divine name.
- C. “For it is said, ‘For a God of knowledge is the Lord’ (1Sa. 2: 3).
- D. “And it is forbidden to have pity on anyone who has no knowledge, as it is said, ‘For it is a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them will have no compassion upon them’ (Isa. 27:11).”
- E. Said R. Eleazar, the elder, “The greatness of the sanctuary is indicated by the fact that it is placed between two references to the divine name, for it is said, ‘You have made, O Lord, the sanctuary, O Lord’ (Exo. 15:17).”
- F. And R. Eleazar said, “As to any person in whom is knowledge, it is as if the house of the sanctuary had been built in his days.
- G. “Knowledge is located between two references to the divine name, and the sanctuary likewise is situated between two references to the divine name.”
- H. *R. Aha Karhinaah objected, “But what about the following:*
- I. *““The greatness of vengeance is indicated by the fact that it is situated between two references to the divine name,*
- K. *““as it is said, “God of vengeance, O Lord” (Psa. 94: 1).”*
- L. *[Eleazar] said to him, “Indeed [vengeance] too is a great thing.”*
- M. That is in line with what Ulla said, “Why is vengeance indicated twice here? One is for good, one for evil.
- N. “For good, as it is written, ‘He shines forth from Mount Paran’ (Deu. 33: 2).

- O. “For evil, as it is written, ‘God of vengeance, O Lord, God of vengeance, shine forth’ (Psa. 94: 1).

IV.1 A. R. Aqiba says, “One says it as a fourth blessing, by itself” [M. 5:2D]:

- B. Said R. Shemen bar Abba to R. Yohanan, “Since the men of the great assembly ordained for Israel the recitation of the blessings, Prayers, rites of sanctification and Prayers of Division, let us see in what place they ordained [that these prayers should be recited].”
- C. He said to him, “To begin with, they gave it its place in the recitation of the Prayer. When they got richer, they gave it its place as a prayer to be recited over a cup of wine. When they became poorer, they went and once more gave it its place in the recitation of the Prayer.
- D. “And they ruled: He who says the Prayer of Division when he recites the Prayer has also to say the Prayer of Division over a cup of wine.”
- E. *It also has been stated on Amoraic authority:*
- F. Said R. Hiyya bar Abba said R. Yohanan, “To begin with, they gave it its place in the recitation of the Prayer. When they got richer, they gave it its place as a prayer to be recited over a cup of wine. When they became poorer, they went and once more gave it its place in the recitation of the Prayer.
- G. “And they ruled: He who says the Prayer of Division when he recites the Prayer has also to say the Prayer of Division over a cup of wine.”

IV.2 A. *It has also been stated on Amoraic authority:*

- B. Rabbah and R. Joseph both say, “He who says the Prayer of Division when he recites the Prayer has also to say the Prayer of Division over a cup of wine.”
- C. *Said Raba, “We may propose an objection to the matter on the basis of that which we have learned:*
- D. “‘If one made a mistake and did not make mention of the blessing ‘power of rain’ in the blessing for the resurrection of the dead, or the petition for rain in the blessing for the years, they make the person go back. [But if he did not make mention of] the Prayer of Division in the blessing, ‘who graciously gives knowledge, they do not make him go back, because he can recite it over a cup of wine’ [cf. T. **Ber. 3:9**]. [This would show that one does not have to say the Prayer of Division both in the recitation of the Prayer and also over a cup of wine, as against Rabbah and R. Joseph’s view that one does.]
- E. [The reply:] Do not recite the language, “Because he can recite it over a cup of wine,” but rather say, “Because he says it over a cup of wine” [but that is not the best way to do it].
- F. *It has also been stated on Amoraic authority:*
- G. Said R. Benjamin bar Japheth, “R. Yosé asked R. Yohanan in Sidon, and some say, R. Simeon b. Jacob of Tyre asked R. Yohanan, ‘But I have heard: ‘He who says the Prayer of Division when he recites the Prayer has also to say the Prayer of Division over a cup of wine. Or does one not have to do so?’
- H. “‘He said to him, “He has to say the Prayer of Division over a cup of wine.”””

IV.3 A. *The question was raised: What is the law as to one who has said the Prayer of Division over a cup of wine having also to say the Prayer of Division when he recites the Prayer?*

- B. Said R. Nahman bar Isaac, "It is an argument a fortiori on the basis of the recitation of the Prayer.
- C. "Now if in the case of the recitation of the Prayer, which is the principal location for the recitation of the Prayer of Division, [sages] have said, 'He who recites the Prayer of Division in the recitation of the Prayer has also to recite the Prayer of Division over a cup of wine,
- D. "then in the case of one who recites the Prayer of Division over a cup of wine, which is not the principal locus for the recitation of that prayer at all, is it not an argument a fortiori [that he should also have to recite the Prayer of Division when he recites the Prayer]?"

IV.4 A. *R. Aha the tall repeated on Tannaite authority before R. Hinena, "He who recites the Prayer of Division in his recitation of the Prayer is more to be praised than is he who recites the Prayer of Division over a cup of wine.*

- B. "And if one recited the Prayer of Division both in the one liturgy and in the other, blessings will come to rest on his head."
- C. *Now the body of the cited statement bears a contradiction.*
- D. *You have said, "He who recites the Prayer of Division in the recitation of the Prayer is more to be praised than is he who recites the Prayer of Division over a cup of wine."*
- E. *Therefore saying the Prayer of Division in the recitation of the Prayer by itself is sufficient [to carry out one's obligation].*
- F. *But then the continuation of the tradition claims: If one has recited the Prayer of Division both in the one and in the other liturgy, blessings will come to rest on his head.*
- G. *Now if it is the fact that one has carried out his obligation to recite the Prayer of Division by doing it one time only, then we have a case in which one recites a blessing which is not called for, and Rab said, and some say, R. Simeon b. Laqish, and some say, R. Yohanan and R. Simeon b. Laqish both say, "Whoever says a blessing that is not called for violates the intent of the verse, 'You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain' (Exo. 20: 7)."*
- H. *Hence I should revise the passage to read as follows:*
- I. If one has said the Prayer of Division in the one place but did not say the Prayer of Division in the other, blessings will [nonetheless] come to rest on his head."

IV.5 A. *R. Hisda asked R. Sheshet, "If one erred both in the one case and in the other, what is the law?"*

- B. He said to him, "If one erred in both the one place and the other, he goes back to the beginning [and recites the Prayer and also the blessing over the cup of wine]."
- C. **[33B]** *Said Rabina to Raba, "What is the decided law?"*
- D. He said to him, "It is comparable to the recitation of the Prayer of Sanctification.

- E. “Just as, in the Prayer for Sanctification, even though one has recited the Sanctification-Prayer in his recitation of the Prayer, he also recites the Sanctification-Prayer over a cup of wine,
- F. “so is the rule governing the Prayer of Division. *Even though one has recited the Prayer of Division in his recitation of the Prayer, he has also to recite the Prayer of Division over a cup of wine.*”

V.1 A. R. Eliezer says, “One says it in the thanksgiving” [M. 5:2E]:

- B. *R. Zira was riding on an ass, and R. Hiyya bar Abin was going along behind him. He said to him, “Is it the case that you have said in the name of R. Yohanan, ‘The law accords with the view of R. Eliezer on the occasion of a festival day which coincides with a Sunday [after the Sabbath], [at which point in the recitation of the Prayer there is no mention of the weekday blessing, ‘who graciously grants knowledge].’?”*
- C. He said to him, “Yes, that is the decided law.”
- D. “Then may one infer that rabbis differ?”
- E. “*And do they not differ? Lo, rabbis do differ.*”
- F. “*I might suppose that rabbis differ with respect to the other days of the year, but do they differ in the case of a festival day that coincides with a Sunday [for the reason explained, there would be no choice for such an occasion]?”*
- G. “*But lo, R. Aqiba does differ [since he allows for the Prayer of Division to stand as a benediction by itself, so he cannot accord with Eliezer’s view of the special case at hand.]”*
- H. “*Do we follow the view of R. Aqiba throughout the year, that now too we should go and follow his view as well!”*
- I. “*What is the reason that for the entire year we do not follow the practice of R. Aqiba? It is because eighteen benedictions have been ordained, but nineteen have not been ordained [on which account Aqiba’s view is rejected]. Here too, seven benedictions have been ordained, but eight have not been ordained.*”
- J. *[Zira] said to him, “It has not been stated as a decided law, but merely as an inclination [and a preference].”*
- K. *For it has been stated on Amoraic authority:*
- L. R. Isaac bar Abdimi said in the name of our master [Rab], “It is the law.”
- M. And some say, “It is an inclination.”
- N. R. Yohanan said, “[Rabbis] concur [with Eliezer].”
- O. And R. Hiyya bar Abba said, “Matters appear [to accord with Eliezer’s view].”
- P. *Said R. Zira, “Take hold of the version of R. Hiyya bar Abba, because he is meticulous about learning traditions from the mouth of the master [who formulated them], just as is Rahba of Pumbedita.”*
- Q. For Rahba said R. Judah said, “The Temple Mount was a double stoa, one within the other.” [In this formulation, Rahba used a less familiar word. Hence it is assumed that he carefully memorized and repeated exactly what he had heard.]”
- R. *Said R. Joseph, “I know neither this version nor that version. But I know that Rab and Samuel ordained for us in Babylonia the following pearl:*

- S. “And you have made known to us, Lord our God, your righteous judgments, taught us to carry out the ordinances that please you, and given us as a heritage seasons of rejoicing and festivals of giving. You have handed on to us the sanctity of the Sabbath and the glory of the festival and the celebration of the feast-day. You have made a division between the sanctity of the Sabbath and the sanctity of the festival-day. You have sanctified the seventh day more than the six days of labor. You have set aside and sanctified your people Israel through your sanctity and given us...,’ etc.”

5:3A-D

- A. **He who says, “May your mercy extend to the nest of a bird,”**
B. **or “For goodness may your name be invoked,”**
C. **[or] “We give thanks, we give thanks” [two times] —**
D. **they silence him.**

- I.1** A. *Now with regard to the one who says, “We give thanks we give thanks,” they silence him, because it appears that there are two dominions [in Heaven].*
B. *And “For goodness may your name be invoked,” also [they silence him], because he implies that [we give thanks] for the good and not for the bad.*
C. *And we have learned A person is obligated to say a blessing for the bad just as he is obligated to say a blessing for the good [M. Ber. 9:1].*
D. *But what is the reason [that they silence one who says], “May your mercy extend to the nest of a bird”?*
E. *Two Amoraic authorities in the West, R. Yosé bar Abin and R. Yosé bar Zebida, differed on that matter.*
F. *One said, “Because that formulation causes jealousy among the works of creation [singling out one for special concern].”*
G. *The other said, “Because it represents the traits of the Holy One, blessed be he, as deriving from mercy, while they derive only from divine decrees.”*

- I.2** A. *A certain man went down [to lead prayer] before Rabbah and said, “You have shown pity to birds in the nest. Show pity and mercy to us.”*
B. *Said Rabbah, “How well does this neophyte rabbi know how to win the favor of his Master.”*
C. *Said Abbaye to him, “But lo, what we have learned in the Mishnah is: **They silence him!**”*
D. *But what Rabbah really wanted to do was to sharpen Abbaye’s wits.*

- I.3** A. *A certain man went down [to lead prayer] before R. Hanina. He said, “...the great, mighty, fearful, majestic, powerful, awful, strong, fearless, sure, and honored God...”*
B. *[Hanina] waited for him to finish. When he had finished, he said to him, “Have you totally completed the list of all praiseworthy traits of your Master? Why are all of these additional adjectives needed?”*
C. *“As to the three traits that we do mention [Great, mighty, fearful], were it not that Moses, our master, had stated them in the Torah and that the men of the great assembly came along and ordained them to be included in the recitation of*

the Prayer, we should not recite even those adjectives. And yet you go on and on to say all of this!

- D. “The matter may be compared to a mortal king who had a thousand thousands of golden denars, and people praised him for having some in silver.
- E. “Is this not an insult to him?”

I.4 A. And R. Hanina said, “Everything is in the hands of heaven except fear of heaven.

- B. “For it is said, ‘And now, Israel, what does the Lord, your God, require of you but to fear’ (Deu. 10:12).”

C. *Is fear of heaven such a small thing?*

- D. And has not R. Hanina said in the name of R. Simeon b. Yohai, “What the Holy One, blessed be he, has in his treasury is only a treasure of fear of heaven.

- E. “For it is said, ‘The fear of the Lord is his treasure’ (Isa. 33: 6).”

F. *Indeed so, for so far as Moses was concerned, it was a small thing.*

- G. For R. Hanina said, “The matter to be compared to a man from whom people sought a big thing. If he has it, to him it seems a small thing. If they ask a small thing and he does not have it, to him it seems a big thing.”

II.1 A. “We give thanks, we give thanks” — they silence him [M. 5:3C-D]:

- B. Said R. Zira, “Whoever says, ‘Hear, hear’ [in the Shema] is like one who says, ‘We give thanks, we give thanks.’”

C. *The objection was raised:*

- D. He who recites the Shema and repeats it — lo, this is improper.

E. *Thus it is, to be sure, improper, but people do not silence him.*

- F. *There is no contradiction.* In the one case [“Hear, hear”] the person says a word and repeats it, in the other, he says a whole sentence [“We give thanks”, “we give thanks”] and repeats it.

- G. *Said R. Pappa to Abbaye, “And perhaps the man to begin with did not pay attention to what he was saying, but in the end he did pay attention. [So why is this improper at all?]”*

- H. *He said to him, [34A] “Is it proper to act in so informal a way toward heaven? If one did not pay attention to begin with, we poke him with a smith’s hammer until he does pay attention.”*

5:3E-H; 5:4

- E. **He who came before the ark [to recite the prayers] and erred — they replace him with another.**

- F. **And one may not be stubborn at this time [if asked to serve as replacement for the one who errs].**

- G. **Whence does he begin [if he replaces another who erred]?**

- H. **From the beginning of the blessing in which the [previous] one had erred.**

M. 5:3

- A. **One who goes before the ark [to lead the prayer] shall not answer “Amen” after the [blessing of the] priests.**

- B. **because of [possible] confusion [which might arise].**

- C. And if [the leader] is the only priest there, he should not raise his hands [to recite the priestly blessing].
- D. But if he is sure that he can raise his hands [to bless] and return to his prayer, he is permitted [to do so].

M. 5:4

I.1 A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. He who passes before the ark [to lead the congregation in prayer] has first of all to decline [the honor], and if he does not decline the honor, he is like a dish without salt.
- C. But if he declines too much, he is like a dish that has been spoiled by salt.
- D. What does one then do?
- E. The first time [he is asked] he should modestly decline. The second time he should waver.
- F. The third time he should stretch out his feet and go down [to lead the prayers].

I.2 A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. There are three things, too much of which is bad but a bit of which is good,
- C. and these are they: yeast, salt, and declining [a public honor].

I.3 A. Said R. Huna, "If one erred in the recitation of the first three blessings, he goes back to the beginning. If it was in the middle blessings, he goes back to 'You favor man with knowledge.'"

- B. "If it was in the last three blessings, he goes back to the passage on the sacrificial service."
- C. And R. Assi said, "If he errs in the middle benedictions, there is no longer any order [applicable to the sequence of blessings]."
- D. *R. Sheshet objected, "Whence does he begin? From the beginning of the blessing in which the previous one had erred [M. 5:3G-H]. That serves as a refutation of the view of R. Huna."*
- E. *R. Huna may say to you, "The benedictions in the middle all constitute a single benediction."*

I.4 A. Said R. Judah, "A person should ask for what he personally needs not in the first three blessings nor in the last three but in the middle ones."

- B. For R. Hanina said, "In the first three blessings one is like a slave, who eulogizes his master; in the middle ones he is like a slave who seeks a reward from his master. The last one is like a servant who has received a reward from his master and is planning to take his leave of him."

I.5 A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. There is the case of a disciple who went down before the ark [to lead prayer] in the presence of R. Eliezer, and he took too long.
- C. His disciples said to [Eliezer], "Our master, this one certainly is a slow-poke."
- D. He said to them, "Does he take any longer than did Moses, our master, concerning whom it is written, 'The forty days and the forty nights...' (Deu. 9:25)."
- E. On another occasion there was a disciple who went down before the ark in the presence of R. Eliezer and he rushed through things very rapidly.

- F. His disciples said to him, "This one certainly cuts it short."
- G. He said to them, "Does he cut things any shorter than did Moses, our master, for it is written [as a complete prayer], 'O God, heal please' (Num. 12:13)."
- H. Said R. Hisda, "Whoever seeks mercy for his fellow does not even have to mention the latter's name, for it is said, 'O God, heal please' (Num. 12:13), and he does not even mention the name of Miriam."

I.6 A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. In connection with these benedictions a person has to bow, in the recitation of the benediction of the fathers, beginning and end, in the thanksgiving, beginning and end.
- C. If someone proposes to bow down at the end of every benediction or at the beginning of every benediction, they teach him not to bow down.
- D. Said R. Simeon b. Pazzi said R. Joshua b. Levi in the name of Bar Qappara, "An ordinary person must conduct himself as we have said.
- E. **[34B]** "A high priest does it at the end of every benediction. A king does it at the beginning of every benediction and at the end of every benediction."
- F. *Said R. Isaac bar Nahmani, "To me did R. Joshua b. Levi explain matters as follows:*
- G. *"An ordinary person does things as we have said.*
- H. *"A high priest bows at the beginning of every benediction.*
- I. *"As to a king, once he has bowed down, he does not again genuflect, for it is said, 'And it was so that when Solomon has made an end of praying... he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees' (1Ki. 8:54)."*

I.7 A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. Bowing is [to fall] on one's face, as it is said, "And Bath Sheba fell on her face to the ground" (1Ki. 1:31).
- C. Kneeling is to go down on one's knees, as it is said, "From kneeling on his knees" (1Ki. 8:54).
- D. Prostrating oneself is to spread out one's hands and feet on the ground, as it is said, "Shall I and your mother and brothers come to prostrate ourselves before you on the ground" (Gen. 37:10).

I.8 A. *Said R. Hiyya, son of R. Huna, "I saw Abbayye and Raba [Simon:] bending to one side."*

- B. *One teaching on Tannaite authority states:* He who kneels down in reciting the thanksgiving benediction — lo, this is one is to be praised.
- C. *And another teaching on Tannaite authority states:* Lo, this is improper.
- D. *There is no contradiction, since the one speaks of what one does at the beginning of reciting the blessing, the other at the end.*
 - E. Raba kneeled down in reciting the thanksgiving benediction both at the beginning and at the end.
 - F. *Rabbis said to him, "Why does the master do it this way?"*
 - G. *He said to them, "I saw R. Nahman kneel down, and I saw R. Sheshet do it this way."*

- H. *But lo, it has been taught on Tannaite authority:* He who kneels down in reciting the thanksgiving benediction — lo, this is improper.
- I. That refers to the thanksgiving prayer that is contained within the Hallel-psalms [Psa. 113-118].
- J. *But lo, it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- K. He who kneels down in reciting the thanksgiving benediction as well as in the thanksgiving prayer of the Hallel-psalms [thus explicitly including the item just now cited] — lo, this is improper.
- L. *When that Tannaite teaching was framed, it referred to the thanksgiving prayer that is contained in the Grace after Meals.*

5:5

- A. **He who erred when reciting the Prayer — it is a bad sign for him.**
- B. **And if he is representing the community [leading the prayer, and erred], it is a bad sign for them that appointed him,**
- C. **[on the principle that] a man's appointed agent is in his stead.**
- D. **They said concerning R. Haninah b. Dosa, that he used to pray for the sick and say "This one shall live" or "This one shall die."**
- E. **They said to him, "Whence do you know?"**
- F. **He said to them, "If my prayer is fluent, then I know that he [for whom I pray] is accepted.**
- G. **"And if not, then I know that he is rejected."**

- I.1** A. *[With reference to M. 5:5A], in which benediction [is it a bad sign to make an error]?*
- B. Said R. Hiyya said R. Safra in the name of one of the members of the house of Rabbi, "In the benediction for the patriarchs."
- C. *There are those who repeat the tradition just now cited with reference to the following Tannaite teaching:*
- D. He who is reciting the Prayer has to direct his heart [to Heaven when reciting] all of [the blessings]. But if he cannot direct his heart rightly in the case of all of them, then let him direct his heart to heaven in the case of one of them.
- E. Said R. Hiyya said R. Safra in the name of one of the members of the house of Rabbi, "It should be in the benediction on the patriarchs."

II.1 A. They said concerning R. Hanina... [M. 5:5D]:

- B. *What is the source for [his view]?*
- C. Said R. Joshua b. Levi, "It is because Scripture has said, 'Peace to him that is far off and to him that is near, saith the Lord who creates the fruit of the lips, and I will heal him' (Isa. 57:19)."

II.2 A. Said R. Hiyya bar Abba said R. Yohanan, "All of the prophets prophesied only for him who marries off his daughter to a disciple of a sage, for him who conducts the business affairs of a disciple of a sage, and for him who gives benefit from his property to a disciple of a sage.

- B. "But as to disciples of sages themselves, 'Eye has not seen, God, beside you, what he will do for him who waits for him (Isa. 54: 3)."

- C. And R. Hiyya bar Abba said R. Yohanan said, "All of the prophets prophesied only concerning the days of the Messiah, but as to the world that will come [thereafter], 'Eye has not seen, God, beside you.'"
- D. *That view differs from the position of Samuel.*
- E. For Samuel said, "There is no difference between this age and the days of the Messiah except for [the end of Israel's subjugation to] the pagan kingdoms alone.
- F. "For it is said, 'For the poor shall never cease out of the land' (Deu. 15:11)."
- G. And R. Hiyya bar Abba said R. Yohanan said, "All of the prophets prophesied only concerning those who repent, but as to those who are entirely righteous, 'Eye has not seen, God, beside you.'"
- H. *That view differs from the position of R. Abbahu.*
- I. For R. Abbahu said, "In a place in which those who repent stand, those who are completely righteous cannot stand, as it is said, 'Peace, peace to him that was far and to him that is near' (Isa. 57:19).
- J. "That is to say, 'To one that was distant at the beginning but has repented and now is near.'"
- K. But R. Yohanan may say to you, "What is the sense of 'distant'? That such a one was distant from transgression to begin with. And what is the sense of 'near'?" It is one who was near transgression but then became distant from it."
- L. *What then is the sense of, "Eye has not seen"?*
- M. Said R. Joshua b. Levi, "This refers to wine that was kept in its grapes from the six days of creation."
- N. R. Samuel bar Nahmani said, "This refers to Eden, which no human eye has seen."
- O. Now should you say, Then where was the first man [if not in Eden]?
- P. He was in the garden.
- Q. Now should you say, "But are the garden and Eden not the same?"
- R. [The answer is no,] for Scripture says, "And a river went out of Eden to water the garden" (Gen. 2:10).
- S. "The meaning is that the garden was one thing, Eden another."

II.3 A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. There was the case in which the son of Rabban Gamaliel fell ill. He sent two disciples of sages to R. Hanina b. Dosa to pray for mercy for him. When he saw them, he went up to his upper room and prayed for mercy for him.
- C. When he came down, he said to them, "Go, for his fever has left him."
- D. They said to him, "Are you a prophet?"
- E. He said to them, "I am not a prophet nor a disciple of a prophet, but this is what I have received as a tradition: **If my prayer is fluent, then I know that he [for whom I pray] is accepted, and if not, then I know that he is rejected**" [M. 5:5F-G].
- F. They sat down and wrote down the hour, and when they came back to Rabban Gamaliel, he said to them "By the Temple service! You were neither early nor late, but that is just how it happened. At that very moment, his fever left him and he asked us for water to drink."

- G. There was the further case involving R. Hanina b. Dosa. He went to study Torah with R. Yohanan b. Zakkai, and the son of R. Yohanan b. Zakkai fell ill.
- H. He said to him, "Hanina, my son, pray for mercy for him so that he will live."
- I. He put his head between his knees and prayed for mercy for him, and he lived.
- J. Said R. Yohanan b. Zakkai, "If Ben Zakkai had put his head between his knees all day long, they would not pay attention to him [in Heaven]."
- K. Said his wife to him, "And is Hanina greater than you?"
- L. He said to her, "No. But he is like a slave before the king, and I am like a prince before the king."

- II.4** A. And R. Hiyya bar Abba said R. Yohanan said, "A person should pray only in a room that has windows.
- B. "For it is said, 'Now his windows were open in his upper chamber towards Jerusalem' (Dan. 6:11)."
 - C. R. Kahana said, "I find nervy someone who prays in a valley [when there is much traffic]."
 - D. And R. Kahana said, "I find nervy someone who spells out his sins [in his prayers], as it is said, 'Happy is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered' (Psa. 32: 1)."