

Talmud Passage of the Week

Title

Originally posted 8/01/96

Look for new passages approximately every 2 weeks (next passage approximately 08/18/96).

Those of you who are following along with us regularly and want to read just the newly posted Talmudic passages can set a bookmark to this page to directly access the new material. You can also find our material on AOL.

Dear Friends,

I'd like to let you know about another Talmud study opportunity. As a way to help people fulfill the mitzvah of studying some Torah, Mishnah and Gemara every day, Maqom is posting a portion related to Parshat Hashavua on a weekly basis at the Jewish Communications Network (JCN) in their [study area](#).

Now, on to our new passage.

Come Again?

Dear Friends,

If we're going to study a tractate of Talmud right through, we'll have to get used to the phenomenon presented in this week's passage. We have a *baraita* (a source from the era of the Mishnah--70-200 C.E.--that wasn't included in either the Mishnah or Tosefta) that repeats much of what we have already learned. Let's face it, folks, this is not the most interesting moment in this tractate. But we're going straight through so I'm putting it in. Here's what I'd do if I were you, and in fact, here's what I actually do myself. Go ahead and read this but don't spend too much time on it. I think Talmud study is made more difficult than it has to be by people thinking that they have to intensely study every single thing in the book. Developing a sense of when to dig deep and when to skim is an important skill in Talmud study. So go ahead and skim! It's Summer time and the Talmud is easy!

Bavli Ta'anit 16b, Steinsaltz, Volume 14, pp. 25-29:

I might have thought that for all the blessings there should only be one praise. Therefore Scripture states: 'Which is exalted above all blessing and praise'--for every blessing give Him praise.

[The Baraita continues] But in the Temple what does he say? 'Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed is the redeemer of Israel.' And they answer after him, "Blessed is the Name of His glorious majesty for ever and ever." And the synagogue attendant says to them, "Sound a tekiah, priests, sons of Aaron, sound a tekiah." And he resumes and says: "He who answered Abraham on Mount Moriah, He will answer you and will hearken unto the sound of your crying [on] this day." [The prayer leader concludes the next blessing:] "Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel, who remembers the forgotten." And they answer after him: "Blessed is the Name of His glorious majesty for ever and ever." And the synagogue attendant says to them, "Sound a teruah, priests, sons of Aaron, sound a teruah, etc." And similarly with each and every blessing for one he says, "Sound a tekiah" and for one he says, "Sound a teruah" until he finished all of them. And thus did Rabbi Halafta institute in tsiפורי and Rabbi Hananyah ben Teradyon in Sakhnin. And when the matter came before the Sages, they said: They would not act this way except at the eastern gates on the Temple Mount."

And there are [some] who say [that it is] as was taught: "He says before them twenty-four blessings, the eighteen of every day, and he adds to them another six. And where does he say those six? Between [the blessing] Redeemer", and [the blessing] "Who heals the sick [of hiHis people Israel]." And he expands [the blessing of] Redemption and they answer "Amen" after him after each and every blessing. And this is how they acted in the [rest of the] country. But in the Temple they would say: "Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed is the Redeemer of Israel." And they would not answer after him "Amen". And why all this? Because we do not answer "Amen" in the Temple. And from where [do we derive] that we do not answer "Amen" in the Temple? For it is said: "Stand up and bless the Lord your God from everlasting to everlasting and let them bless Your glorious Name, which is exalted above all blessing and prasi"--for each and every blessing give Him praise.

Our Rabbis taught: "For the first ones he says: "Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed is the Redeemer of Israel." And they answer after him: "Blessed is the Name of His glorious majesty for ever and ever." And the synagogue attendant says, "Sound a tekiah, priests, sound a tekiah." And he resumes and says, "He who answered Abraham on Mount Moriah, He will answer you and will hearken unto the sound of your crying [on] this day." And they sound a tekiah and they sound a teruah and they sound a tekiah. And for the second one he says, "Blessed is the Lord the God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed is He who remembers the forgotten." And they answer after him: "Blessed is the Name of His glorious majesty for ever and ever." And the synagogue attendant says, "Sound a teruah sons of Aaron, sound a teruah." And he says: "He who answered our forefathers at the Red Sea, He will answer you and will hearken utno the sound of your crying [on] this day." And they sound a teruah and they sound a tekiah and they sound a teruah. And simiarly with each and every blessing for one he says, "Sound a tekiah" and for one he says, "Sound a teruah" until he finishes all the blessings. And thus did Rabbi Halafta institute in Tshipori and Rabbi Hananyah ben Teradyon in Sikhnin. And when the amtter came before the Sages they said: They would not act this way except at the eatern gates on the Temple Mount."

Background

We have covered most of this material, or material like it, before and it should be familiar to you. The Gemara continues to provide different perspectives on what happened during Fast Days and contrasting behavior on the Temple Mount with ritual behavior elsewhere.

Discussion Questions

1. The Gemara shows how we have different traditions about the same thing. By including them, it validates these different versions in some way. Imagine sitting in High Holidays services, as we will all be doing soon. Try looking at it from a "Gemara" point of view. How would the Cantor report services? The Rabbi? The person three rows in front of you? Each of them has a perspective and each of them is, to some extent, correct. Developing the ability to see things from inside another person is one of the things Talmud study can train you to do. How might this lead you to a higher level of righteousness?
2. OK, prove me wrong. Tell me what's really interesting in this passage!