

(33) Ibid.

(34) I.e., in the original language.

Talmud - Mas. Megilah 17b

, [And these words] shall be,¹ which implies, they shall be kept as they are. And what is the reason of the Rabbis? — Because Scripture says, Hear,² which implies, in any language which you understand. How then can Rabbi [hold otherwise], seeing that it is written, ‘hear’? — He requires that word for the injunction, ‘Let thine ear hear what thou utterest with thy mouth’. The Rabbis, however, concurred with the authority who said that if one recites the Shema’ without making it audible, he has performed his obligation. But the Rabbis too — [how can they hold as they do], seeing that it is written, ‘And they shall be’? — They require this for the injunction that it should not be recited backwards. Whence does Rabbi derive the rule that it should not be recited backwards? From [the use of the expression] ‘the words’, where ‘words’ [would have been sufficient]. The Rabbis, however, do not accept this distinction between ‘the words’ and ‘words’.

May we say that Rabbi was of opinion that the whole of the Torah has been ordained [to be recited] in any language?³ For should you assume that it has been ordained [to be recited] only in the holy tongue, why should the words ‘and they shall be’ be inserted [in reference to the Shema’]? — These were necessary. For it might have occurred to me to understand ‘hear’ in the same sense as the Rabbis:⁴ therefore the All-Merciful wrote ‘and they shall be’. May we then say that the Rabbis were of opinion that the whole of the Torah was ordained [to be recited] only in the holy tongue, since, should you assume that it was ordained to be recited in any language, [I might ask], why should ‘hear’ be inserted [in reference to the Shema’]? — This word is necessary. For it might occur to me to understand ‘and they shall be’ in the same sense as Rabbi. Therefore the All-Merciful wrote, ‘hear’.

‘To the ‘Amidah prayer’. Whence is this derived? — As it has been taught: ‘Simeon the Pakulite⁵ formulated eighteen blessings in the presence of Rabban Gamaliel in the proper⁶ order in Jabneh.⁷ R. Johanan said (others report, it was stated in a Baraitha): A hundred and twenty elders, among whom were many prophets, drew up eighteen blessings in a fixed order’.

Our Rabbis taught: Whence do we derive that the blessing of the Patriarchs⁸ should be said? Because it says, Ascribe unto the Lord, O ye sons of might.⁹ And whence that we say the blessing of mighty deeds?¹⁰ Because it says, Ascribe unto the Lord glory and strength.¹¹ And whence that we say sanctifications?¹² Because it says, Ascribe unto the Lord the glory due unto His name, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.¹³ What reason had they for mentioning understanding¹⁴ after holiness? Because it says, They shall sanctify the Holy One of Jacob and shall stand in awe of the God of Israel,¹⁵ and next to this, They also that err in spirit shall come to understanding. What reason had they for mentioning repentance¹⁶ after understanding? Because it is written, Lest they, understanding with their heart, return and be healed.¹⁷ If that is the reason, healing should be mentioned next to repentance?¹⁸ — Do not imagine such a thing, since it is written, And let him return unto the Lord and He will have compassion upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.¹⁹ But why should you rely upon this verse? Rely rather on the other! — There is written another verse, Who forgiveth all thine iniquity, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from the pit,²⁰ which implies that redemption and healing come after forgiveness. But it is written, ‘Lest they return and be healed’? That refers not to the healing of sickness but to the healing [power] of forgiveness. What was their reason for mentioning redemption in the seventh blessing?²¹ Raba replied: Because they [Israel] are destined to be redeemed in the seventh year [of the coming of the Messiah],²² therefore the mention of redemption was placed in the seventh blessing. But a Master has said, ‘In the sixth year will be thunderings, in the seventh wars, at the end of the seventh the son of David will come’? — War is also the beginning of redemption. What was their reason for

mentioning healing in the eighth blessing? — R. Aha said: Because circumcision which requires healing is appointed for the eighth day, therefore it was placed in the eighth blessing. What was their reason for placing the [prayer for the] blessing of the years ninth? R. Alexandri said: This was directed against those who raise the market price [of foodstuffs], as it is written, Break thou the arm of the wicked; and when David said this, he said it in the ninth Psalm.²³

What was their reason for mentioning the gathering of the exiles after the blessing of the years? — Because it is written, But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to thy people Israel, for they are at hand to come.²⁴ And when the exiles are assembled, judgment will be visited on the wicked, as it says, And I will turn my hand upon thee and purge away thy dross as with lye,²⁵ and it is written further, And I will restore thy judges as at the first.²⁶ And when judgment is visited on the wicked, transgressors cease,²⁷ and presumptuous sinners²⁸ are included with them, as it is written, But the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed.²⁹ And when the transgressors have disappeared, the horn of the righteous is exalted,³⁰ as it is written, All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be lifted up.³¹ And ‘proselytes of righteousness’³² are included with the righteous, as it says, thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honour the face of the old man,³³ and the text goes on, And if a stranger sojourn with thee. And where is the horn of the righteous exalted? In Jerusalem,³⁴ as it says, Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, may they prosper that love thee.³⁵ And when Jerusalem is built, David³⁶ will come, as it says.

(1) Deut. VI, 6.

(2) Ibid. 4. The word **שמע** means both ‘hear’ and ‘understand’.

(3) According to Tosaf., this refers only to those passages of the Scripture which were to be recited on special occasions, e.g., the passage relating to the first-fruit, the declaration of halizah etc.

(4) Viz., in any language.

(5) Possibly this means ‘cotton dealer’ (Rashi).

(6) I.e. one based on Scriptural texts, as explained infra.

(7) V. Ber. 28b.

(8) The first blessing, containing the words, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’. For the ‘Amidah prayer v. P.B. pp. 44ff.

(9) Ps. XXIX, 1. ‘Sons of might’ is taken as a description of the Patriarchs. The Talmud renders: ‘Mention before the Lord the sons of might’, i.e., the Patriarchs.

(10) The second blessing, mentioning the ‘mighty deed’ of the resurrection.

(11) Ps. XXIX, 1.

(12) The third blessing beginning, ‘Thou art holy’.

(13) Ibid. 2.

(14) In the fourth blessing, beginning, ‘Thou grantest to man understanding’.

(15) Isa. XXIX, 23f.

(16) In the fifth blessing, commencing, ‘Bring us back, O Father’.

(17) Ibid. VI, 10.

(18) Whereas in fact it comes in the next blessing but one, ‘redemption’ being interposed.

(19) Ibid. LV, 7.

(20) Ps. CIII, 3f.

(21) Concluding, ‘Blessed art thou, O Lord, who redeemest Israel’.

(22) V. Sanh. 97a.

(23) In our books it is the tenth (v. 15), but the Talmud apparently reckoned the first and second Psalms as one.

(24) Ezek. XXXVI, 8.

(25) Isa. I, 25.

(26) Ibid. 26. The next blessing proceeds, ‘Restore our judges’. etc.

(27) MS. M. minim (plur. of min v. Glos.).

(28) Mentioned in the next blessing. This, however, was not one of the original eighteen, v. Ber. 28b.

(29) Ibid. 28.

(30) The next blessing concludes, 'the support and trust of the righteous'.

(31) Ps. LXXV, II.

(32) Mentioned in the same blessing. 'Proselytes of Righteousness' are converts who completely accept the Jewish creed and life.

(33) Lev. XIX, 32.

(34) Mentioned in the next blessing.

(35) Ps. CXXII, 6.

(36) Mentioned in the next blessing, which commences, 'Cause to sprout quickly the shoot of David'.

Talmud - Mas. Megilah 18a

Afterwards shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king.¹ And when David comes, prayer² will come, as it says. Even then will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer.³ And when prayer has come, the Temple service⁴ will come, as it says, Their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be acceptable upon mine altar.⁵ And when the service comes, thanksgiving⁶ will come, as it says. Whoso offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving honoureth me.⁷ What was their reason for inserting the priestly benediction after thanksgiving? Because it is written, And Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and he came down from offering the sin-offering and the burnt-offering and the peace-offerings.⁸ But cannot I say that he did this before the service? — Do not imagine such a thing. For it is written, 'and he came down from offering'. Is it written 'to offer'? It is written, 'from offering'.⁹ Why not then say it [the priestly benediction] after the [blessing of] the Temple service? — Do not imagine such a thing, since it is written, whoso offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving.¹⁰ Why base yourself upon this verse? Why not upon the other? — It is reasonable to regard service and thanksgiving as one. What was their reason for having 'give peace' said after the priestly benediction? — Because it is written, So they [the priests] shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and [then] I shall bless them;¹¹ and the blessing of the Holy One, blessed be He, is peace, as it says, The Lord shall bless his people with peace.¹²

Seeing now that a hundred and twenty elders, among whom were many prophets. drew up the prayers in the proper order, why did Simeon the Pakulite formulate them? — They were forgotten, and he formulated them afresh. Beyond this it is forbidden to declare the praise of the Holy One, blessed be He.¹³ For R. Eleazar said: What is the meaning of the verse, Who can express the mighty acts of the Lord, or make all his praise to be heard?¹⁴ For whom is it fitting to express the mighty acts of the Lord? For one who can make all his praise to be heard. Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Johanan: One who descants upon the praises of the Holy One, blessed be He, to excess is uprooted from the world, as it says, Shall it be told to him that I should speak? Should a man [try to] say, surely he would be swallowed up.¹⁵ R. Judah a man of Kefar Gibboraya,¹⁶ or, as some say, of Kefar Gibbor Hayil,¹⁷ gave the following homily: What is meant by the verse, For thee silence is praise?¹⁸ The best medicine of all is silence. When R. Dimi came, he said: In the West¹⁹ they say: A word is worth a sela', silence two sela's.

IF ONE READS IT BY HEART, HE HAS NOT PERFORMED HIS OBLIGATION. Whence this rule? — Raba said: We explain the expression zekirah²⁰ in one passage from its use in another. It is written here, And these days shall be nizkarim²¹ [remembered] and it is written elsewhere, Write this le-zikaron [for a memorial] in the book.²² Just as there it was to be in a book, so here it must be in a book. But how do we know that this 'nizkarim' implies 'uttering'? Perhaps it means mere reading with the eyes? — Do not imagine such a thing, since it has been taught: 'Remember' [zakor].²³ Am I to say, this means only with the mind? When the text says, thou shalt not forget, the injunction against mental forgetfulness is already given. What then am I to make of 'remember'? This must mean, by utterance.²⁴