

Imagining a New World When Your Old One Collapses: The Rabbinic Response to the Destruction of the Temple

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1. Mishnah Berakhot 1:5

<p>They mention the Exodus from Egypt at night. Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah said: "Behold, I am almost a seventy-year old man and I have not succeeded in [understanding why] the Exodus from Egypt should be mentioned at night, until Ben Zoma explained it from a verse (Deuteronomy 16:3): 'In order that you may remember the day you left Egypt all the days of your life.' 'The days of your life' refers to the days. 'All the days of your life' refers to the nights. And the sages say: 'the days of your life' refers to this world. 'All the days of your life' includes the days of the Messiah.</p>	<p>מִזְפִּירִין יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם בַּלַּיְלוֹת. אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה, הֲרִי אָנִי כְּבֹן שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה, וְלֹא זָכִיתִי שֶׁתֵּאמֹר יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם בַּלַּיְלוֹת, עַד שֶׁדָּרְשָׁה בֶּן זֹמָא, שֶׁנֶּאמַר (דְּבָרִים טז) לְמַעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת יוֹם צֵאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ. יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ, הַיָּמִים. כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ, הַלַּיְלוֹת. וְחֻכְמַיִם אֲוֹמְרִים, יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ, הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה. כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ, לְהַבְיֵא לַיְמוֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ:</p>
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2. Mishnah Berakhot 2

<p>1. If one was reading in the Torah [the section of the Shema] and the time for its recital arrived, if he directed his heart [to fulfill the mitzvah] he has fulfilled his obligation, but if not he has not fulfilled his obligation. In the breaks [between sections] one may give greeting out of respect and return greeting; in the middle [of a section] one may give greeting out of fear and return it, the words of Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Judah says: in the middle one may give greeting out of fear and return it out of respect, in the breaks one may give greeting out of respect and return greeting to anyone.</p>	<p>הִיא קוֹרֵא בַּתּוֹרָה, וְהִגִּיעַ זְמַן הַמִּקְרָא, אִם כְּוֹן לְבוֹ, יֵצֵא. וְאִם לֹא, לֹא יֵצֵא. בַּפְּרָקִים שׁוֹאֵל מִפְּנֵי הַכְּבוֹד וּמְשִׁיב, וּבְאִמְצַע שׁוֹאֵל מִפְּנֵי הִירְאָה וּמְשִׁיב, דְּבַרֵי רַבִּי מֵאִיר. רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אֹמֵר, בְּאִמְצַע שׁוֹאֵל מִפְּנֵי הִירְאָה, וּמְשִׁיב מִפְּנֵי הַכְּבוֹד, בַּפְּרָקִים שׁוֹאֵל מִפְּנֵי הַכְּבוֹד, וּמְשִׁיב שְׁלוֹם לְכָל אָדָם:</p>
<p>2. These are the breaks between the sections: between the first blessing and the second, between the second and "Shema," between "Shema" and "And it shall come to pass if you listen" between "And it shall come to pass if you listen" and "And the Lord said" and between "And the Lord said" and "Emet veYatziv" (true and firm). Rabbi Judah says: between "And the Lord said" and "Emet veYatziv" one should not interrupt. Rabbi Joshua ben Korhah said: Why was the section of "Shema" placed before that of "And it shall come to pass if you listen"? So</p>	<p>אֵלוֹ הֵן בֵּין הַפְּרָקִים, בֵּין בְּרָכָה רִאשׁוֹנָה לְשֵׁנִיָּה, בֵּין שְׁנִיָּה לְשִׁמְעַ, וּבֵין שְׁמַע לְוְהִיא אִם שְׁמַע, בֵּין וְהִיא אִם שְׁמַע לְוִיאֵמֹר, בֵּין וִיאֵמֹר לְאֵמֶת וַיֵּצֵיב. רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אֹמֵר, בֵּין וִיאֵמֹר לְאֵמֶת וַיֵּצֵיב לֹא יִפְסִיק. אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן קֶרְחָה, לָמָּה קִדְמָה שְׁמַע</p>

<p>that one should first accept upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven and then take upon himself the yoke of the commandments. Why does the section of “And it shall come to pass if you listen” come before that of “And the Lord said”? Because “And it shall come to pass if you listen” is customary during both day and night, whereas [the section] “And the Lord said” is customary only during the day.</p>	<p>לוְהִיָּה אִם שָׁמַע, אֲלֵא כִּדֵי שְׂיִקְבֵּל עָלָיו עַל מַלְכוּת שְׁמַיִם תְּחִלָּה, וְאַחַר כֵּן יִקְבֵּל עָלָיו עַל מִצְוֹת. וְהִיָּה אִם שָׁמַע לְוַיֹּאמֶר, שְׁוִהִיָּה אִם שָׁמַע נוֹהֵג בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה, וַיֹּאמֶר אֵינוֹ נוֹהֵג אֲלֵא בַּיּוֹם:</p>
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3. Mishnah Berakhot 9

<p>1. If one sees a place where miracles have been done for Israel, he says, “Blessed be the One who made miracles for our ancestors in this place.” [If one sees] a place from which idolatry has been uprooted, he should say, “Blessed be the One who removed idolatry from our land.”</p>	<p>הַרוֹאֶה מְקוֹם שֶׁנִּעְשׂוּ בוֹ נִסִּים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, אוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמְקוֹם הַזֶּה. מְקוֹם שֶׁנִּעְקְרָה מִמֶּנּוּ עֲבוֹדַת זָרָה, אוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ שֶׁעָקַר עֲבוֹדַת זָרָה מֵאַרְצֵנוּ:</p>
<p>2. [On witnessing] comets, earthquakes, thunder, or windy storms one says, “Blessed be He whose strength and might fill the world.” [On seeing] mountains, hills, seas, rivers or deserts one says, “Blessed be He who made creation.” Rabbi Judah says: one who sees the Great Sea should say, “Blessed be He who made the Great Sea,” if he sees it at intervals. For rain and for good news one says, “Blessed be He that is good and grants good.” For bad news one says, “Blessed be the true judge.”</p>	<p>עַל הַזִּיקִין, וְעַל הַזְּעוּעוֹת, וְעַל הַבְּרָקִים, וְעַל הַרְעָמִים, וְעַל הַרוּחוֹת, אוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ שֶׁכָּחוֹ וּגְבוּרָתוֹ מְלֵא עוֹלָם. עַל הַהָרִים, וְעַל הַגְּבְעוֹת, וְעַל הַיָּמִים, וְעַל הַנְּהָרוֹת, וְעַל הַמַּדְבָּרוֹת, אוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ עוֹשֵׂה מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית. רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אוֹמֵר, הַרוֹאֶה אֶת הַיָּם הַגָּדוֹל אוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ שֶׁעָשָׂה אֶת הַיָּם הַגָּדוֹל, בְּזִמְנֵי שְׁרוּאָה אוֹתוֹ לְפָרְקִים. עַל הַגְּשָׁמִים וְעַל הַבְּשׂוּרוֹת הַטּוֹבוֹת אוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ הַטּוֹב וְהַמְּטִיב, וְעַל שְׂמוּעוֹת רָעוֹת אוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ דִּין הָאֱמֶת:</p>
<p>3. One who has built a new house or bought new vessels says, “Blessed be He who has kept us alive [and preserved us and brought us to this season.]” One who blesses over the evil as he blesses over the good or over the good as he blesses over evil; one who cries over the past, behold this is a vain prayer. How so? If his wife was pregnant and he says, “May it be his will that my wife bear a male child,” this is a vain prayer. If he is coming home from a journey and he hears a cry of distress in the town and says, “May it be his will that this is not be those of my house,” this is a vain prayer.</p>	<p>בָּנָה בַּיִת חֲדָשׁ, וְקָנָה כֵּלִים חֲדָשִׁים, אוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ שֶׁחַיֵּינוּ. מְבָרַךְ עַל הַרְעָה מֵעֵין הַטּוֹבָה, וְעַל הַטּוֹבָה מֵעֵין הַרְעָה. הַצּוֹעֵק לְשַׁעֲבֵר, הָרִי זוֹ תַּפְלַת שְׂוֵא. כִּי־צַד. הִיתָה אֲשֶׁתּוֹ מְעַבְרַת, וְאָמַר, יְהִי רְצוֹן שֶׁתֵּלֵד אֲשֶׁתִּי זָכָר, הָרִי זוֹ תַּפְלַת שְׂוֵא. הִיָּה בָּא בַדְרֹךְ וְשָׁמַע קוֹל צְנוּחָה בְּעִיר, וְאָמַר יְהִי רְצוֹן שֶׁלֹּא יְהִיו אֱלוֹ בְנֵי בֵּיתִי, הָרִי זוֹ תַּפְלַת שְׂוֵא:</p>

4. Babylonian Talmud, Ketubot 111a

<p>Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: Just as it is prohibited to leave Eretz Yisrael and go to Babylonia, so too, is it prohibited to leave Babylonia for any of the other lands. Rabba and Rav Yosef both say: Even to go from Pumbedita to Bei Kuvei, which is located beyond the border of Babylonia proper, is not permitted. A certain man left Pumbedita to live in Bei Kuvei, and Rav Yosef excommunicated him. A certain man left Pumbedita to live in Astonia, which also lay beyond the borders of Babylonia proper, and he died. Abaye said: Had this Torah scholar wanted, he would still be alive, as he could have stayed in Babylonia. ...</p>	<p>אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל כשם שאסור לצאת מארץ ישראל לבבל כך אסור לצאת מבבל לשאר ארצות רבה ורב יוסף דאמרי תרוייהו אפילו מפומבדיתא לבי כובי ההוא דנפק מפומבדיתא לבי כובי שמתיה רב יוסף ההוא דנפק מפומבדיתא לאסתוניה שכיב אמר אביי אי בעי האי צורבא מרבנן הוה חיי ...</p>
<p>Rav Yehuda said: With regard to anyone who resides in Babylon, it is as though he is residing in Eretz Yisrael, as it is stated: “Ho Zion, escape, you who dwells with the daughter of Babylon” (Zechariah 2:11). This verse equates the two countries. Abaye said: We have a tradition that Babylonia will not see the pangs of the Messiah, i.e., it will be spared the suffering that will occur at the time of his arrival.</p>	<p>אמר רב יהודה כל הדר בבבל כאילו דר בארץ ישראל שנאמר (זכריה ב, יא) הוי ציון המלטי יושבת בת בבל אמר אביי נקטינן בבל לא חזיא חבלי דמשיח</p>