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THE PRIVATE PRAYERS OF THE RABBIS:

ASPECTS OF THEIR FORM AND CONTENT

by Barton G. Lee

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
requirements for the Degree of Master of
Arts in Hebrew Letters and Ordination

Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion

Cincinnati, Ohio

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Referee, Professor Jakob J. Petuchowski

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DIGEST

Inquiry into the private prayers of the rabbis which are recorded in Talmud and Midrash enriches our knowledge and understanding of the liturgical expression of the rabbinic period. Application of the method of form criticism, pioneered in Jewish liturgy by Joseph Heinemann, uncovers many characteristics of the private prayers which enable us to categorize them, discover their origins, and compare them with the statutory prayers.

This thesis considers the form and content of the private prayer of the rabbis in detail. It employs the form critical approach. The thesis opens with a discussion of the development of the statutory liturgy to provide background for its consideration of private rabbinic prayer. Some of the formal characteristics of private prayers are then presented; special note is taken of formulae unique to private prayer. The extensively used courtroom pattern is next examined. Investigation of the formal characteristics of prayer originating in the Bet Ha Midrash illumines further the realm of private prayer and illustrates its influence upon later development of the siddur.

There follows analysis of the content of the private petitionary prayer of the rabbis. An attempt is made to characterize the petitionary prayer as a whole; the interweaving of the dominant themes within the prayers is shown. Also analyzed are prayers which are purely thanksgiving prayers.

Two other categories of prayers which emerge from the daily life of the rabbis are considered. Examined are the form and content

of the blessings whereby a man blesses his fellow. Set forth is another prayer pattern, that of the רבי חנינא and יהי רצון petitions.

The conclusion demonstrates how the rabbis expanded Jewish religious expression through their private devotions and how their private worship significantly influenced later liturgical development.

PREFACE

My interest in Jewish liturgy began when I was a child. I think I have always liked the prayers of my people, especially prayers in Hebrew. As a youngster, under the tuteledge of Mr. Milton Bendiner, I learned the rudiments of Hebrew and of the service and was proud to take my turn as a reader in our Temple's Junior Congregation. From going to schul with my cousins, I learned, too, to enjoy the chanting of the traditional liturgy.

As a member of the temple youth group, my interests in liturgy developed further. Then I had the opportunity to try to express myself in prayer, to join with my peers to create services which we hoped would be more relevant and more meaningful than the Union Prayerbook. But while I was exhilarated by the freedom to create, I came to realize that our creation was inadequate, to feel that a great knowledge of Jewish tradition was necessary to underlie creative liturgical expression so that it might be enriched with Jewish content and flavor.

My friend, the late Byron Klorfine, stirred my liturgical interests as we worked together in Hillel at Stanford University. Byron was a marvelous person, and he took Jewish tradition seriously. Together we sought to create meaningful services using all four of the siddurim of the major Jewish movements; we tried to enrich modern ideas with traditional materials, to deepen traditional prayers with modern expressions.

When I learned, at Hebrew Union College and in Israel, to understand the siddur, my interest in liturgy became a passion. Davening,

in Israel, studying with Dr. Joseph Heinemann, discussing with my Israeli friend Ephy Carmel, writing services with my friend Roy Walter -- all these have contributed to flowering of my liturgical interests.

At Hebrew Union College, I have been privileged to study with and come to know Prof. Jakob J. Petuchowski, who has done so much to direct my studies, to deepen my knowledge of Judaism, and to encourage my liturgical interests. I can truly call Dr. Petuchowski "מורי ורבי, my rabbi, my teacher." He has guided me in this research, and his comments and suggestions have been invaluable. His influence is to be found in whatever may be deemed creditable in my work. I am deeply grateful to him.

I should like to thank my typist, Mrs. Phyllis Sasser, whose patience, competence, and good cheer have been indispensible to the preparation of this research.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Lewis and Charlotte Lee. They have set before me a wonderful example; they have encouraged me and guided me with love and with wisdom at every stage of my growth. For them I pray God's blessings of health, happiness, and long life. For myself, I pray that I may bring credit to them through my service to my people as a rabbi in Israel.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Prayer is a basic religious activity, an essential act of religious expression. Prayer is a primary means by which a religious man expresses his own beliefs and hopes, his quest and requests. And for the religious community, even as for an individual, prayer is a central religious concern.

For the rabbis, worship is " עבודה שבלב, service of the heart."[1] To serve God with all one's heart is to serve Him through prayer. And it is through prayer that the Jew, alone or in the community of Israel, addresses God, lays bare his own heart; in prayer the Jew confronts the God of Israel and offers praise and makes supplication before the Master of the Universe. Prayer in Judaism is the essential communications link between God and man.

Prayers originally result from a spontaneous religious experience, an outpouring of religious feeling and inspiration. Frequently words of spontaneous prayer, spoken by men of deep spirituality and gifted expression, are recorded or remembered. Such expressions, flowing from religious inspiration and emotion of a particular moment, often achieve a life beyond that particular moment itself. Since the ability to articulate the feelings of the heart in words of poetic beauty is a rare gift, men of lesser gifts of expression will appropriate such words of beauty and feeling for placing their own intense religious feelings into words of prayer.

Words of prayer which were originally spontaneous utterances are recorded because they convey meaning, insight, and beauty. They

have the power to express deep religious feelings of others who lack the power to express themselves. And they have the power to inspire the minds and awaken the hearts of those who lack the deep religious feelings which those words express. Such words of prayer become part of a prayer tradition. The phrases and themes and patterns of such prayers become a part of the religious vocabulary of the members of the religious group who share the tradition. They are repeated as expressions of personal religious sentiment and are often incorporated into a fixed liturgy, becoming part of public worship services or bound to specific religious occasions or observances. Thus, words of spontaneous prayer of especial worth are recorded and become sources for inspiration and expression for personal and group prayer.

There is a constant dialetic which pervades the development of Jewish liturgy -- two tendencies which exist simultaneously. On the one hand there is the outpouring of spontaneous prayer expression. On the other is the tendency to record, to codify, to maintain the prayers of the past which articulate with especial refinement and beauty important religious ideas and emotions.

The siddur, the Jewish prayerbook which has developed over the ages is a result of this dialetic. Turning to the most basic sources of the siddur, the Talmud and Midrash,we find the process clearly at work. Recorded therein, are the debates and decisions through which the rabbis prescribed the elements of the statutory liturgy, the core of the siddur. Yet, at the same time, both the Talmud and Midrash record a vast

literature of other prayers, the private prayers of the rabbis. These rabbinic prayers were spontaneous outpourings of religious expression. Though they were not included in the statutory liturgy, they were recorded and thus passed on to the people. Through the years, some of these private prayers were incorporated into the siddur. The patterns and forms of these prayers influenced the composition of later prayers.

Our study is concerned specifically with the private prayer tradition of the rabbis which we find recorded in the Talmud and Midrash. We shall attempt to categorize the various prayers which we find in the sources, identify common themes, styles, forms and patterns which recur in the prayers, and comment upon the content of the private prayers of the rabbis. We shall comment upon the fixed liturgy insofar as it illumines the developments in private prayer and provides a basis for contrasting public and private worship. We shall attempt through our examination of the private prayers to enrich our understanding of the religious expression of the rabbis. Perhaps, too, we can deepen our own resources for contemporary prayer expression by borrowing from the private prayer tradition of our ancestors. For the modern Jew, prayer does not come easily, and perhaps we, for whom prayer expression is difficult, will find it "more inspiring to let the heart echo the music of the ages than to play upon the broken flutes of our own hearts."[2] Hopefully, our increased knowledge of the forms and patterns and content of the private prayers of the rabbis will provide us with means to open channels of prayer expression for ourselves.

CHAPTER II

THE STATUTORY LITURGY --

ITS DEVELOPMENT AND ITS FORMS

The central core of Jewish liturgy is the statutory prayer. The statutory prayer consists of fixed and required liturgical elements, including the sh'ma and its blessings and the tefillah, the prayer par excellence. The dimension of private rabbinic prayer can be understood and assessed only upon the background of the statutory liturgy. Understanding of the contents and forms of the fixed liturgy and appreciation of the process by which the statutory liturgy developed during the period of the Tannaim and Ammoraim is imperative for meaningful analysis of the private prayers of the rabbis which were recorded simultaneously.

There have been many distinguished scholarly explications of the development of the fixed liturgy. Some scholars hold that the statutory liturgy was the product of a central ordering body which composed and enacted it; others deem the development of the statutory liturgy to have been a long, gradual process. I believe that the best evidence supports the latter view. The most persuasive and logical reconstructions of the process of the development of the liturgy are the classic work of Prof. I. Elbogen and the recent work of Dr. Joseph Heinemann. Upon their work, our own summary of the development of the statutory liturgy heavily leans. [1]

We have observed that the rabbis called prayer the "service of the heart," a term which alludes to the sacrifices, and it is clear that the custom of fixed Jewish worship is ancient indeed. The process of the development of the liturgy began hundreds of years before the destruction

of the Temple, continuing slowly, and crystallizing finally in the generation after the Temple's destruction. By the end of that generation the statutory liturgy had been codified as to number of blessings, order, and detail. Exact texts, however, had probably not been fixed in their final forms.[2]

The Talmud records rabbinic debates which indicate that the rabbis themselves ascribed the original of the fixed worship to an early period. Various passages contain dicta holding that the tefillah was ordained respectively by 120 elders and some prophets,[3] by the Men of the Great Assembly,[4] by the earliest rabbis (חכמים)[5], by the earliest pious men (אנשי מעשה).[6] Other dicta ascribe the enactment of the three tefillot to the Patriarchs. The common element among these various statements is their testimony that the practice of fixed prayer in Israel stems from a very early period. Indeed, the practice of a regular time for prayer is already hinted at in Daniel 6:11 and in Psalm 15:18.

Prayer originally seems to have been parallel activity to the sacrifices. This was so even before destruction of the Temple. One significant locus of the development of public liturgy was the local Ma-amadot, which enabled people throughout the Land of Israel to participate in the Temple cult. To achieve this participation, the country was divided into twenty-four districts. Each district would send representatives to Jerusalem twice yearly for a period of a week. These people would attend the daily sacrifices and fast and utter certain prayers. At

home, while their representatives were at the Temple, people would gather together for Torah study and for the recitation of prayers which their representatives were reciting at the Temple. Later this practice seems to have been extended from two weeks to a whole year.[8]

It must be assumed that fixed prayer in Israel was public at its outset. The settings in which the earliest prayer texts were used -- the ma-amadot and the Temple itself -- were public by their very nature. Further, none of the prayers which make up the statutory liturgy appears in the first person. The language of the fixed liturgy is wholly plural; when praying the statutory prayers the individual prays in the plural, viewing himself as part of the whole public, linking himself to the community and linking his petitions to theirs.[9]

Additional evidence for the public setting of the development of the liturgy is the fact that there are certain prayers, matters of Kedushah, holiness, which may not be recited except where there is present a minyan, a quorum of ten men.[10] Further, recitation of the additional service, the musaf, is prohibited except where there exists a מנין. Dr. Heinemann explains this prohibition as meaning that without the presence of a community, the musaf was not recited by the individual at all.[11]

The prayers which became incorporated into the fixed liturgy were spontaneous creations. The statutory liturgy came into being as a crystallization of customs which grew up and were common to various localities. Many variations of the same prayer existed side by side; the texts

used by various localities were often unique to that locality. There was considerable flexibility in language and content, yet certain common forms and themes gained wide acceptance, and even sanctity, and they were included in different prayers and different local traditions.[12]

Linguistically, the statutory prayers borrowed much from the Bible, especially from the rich prayer language of the Psalms. Phrases and ideas from the Bible were used freely and creatively, but the authors of rabbinic prayer carefully avoided using the same kind of prayer-poetry forms which are found in the Psalms. Early rabbinic prayer is devoid of hymnological prayers and exalted, psalm-like poetry.[13]

The hallmark of the fixed liturgy is the berakhah formula. The berakhah includes what is called a חתימה or a סיום, a standard liturgical stamp which consists of the words "ברוך אתה יי, Blessed are You, Lord." Liturgical use of the formula became carefully regulated; the berakhah form is almost exclusively used for fixed and required prayers. Several variations of the berakhah are catalogued: There is a short blessing, a ברכה קצרה, a blessing which opens with ברוך but which does not close with it. There is a long blessing, a ברכה ארוכה, which both opens and closes with ברוך. The long ברכה opens with the key phrase, ברוך אתה יי, proceeds to an expansion of the subject of the blessing, and concludes with a חתימה מלאה, a summary seal or eulogy, which opens with the words ברוך אתה יי.

A third category is the ברכה סמוכה לחברתה, one blessing juxtaposed to another. Here only the first in a series of blessings, such as occur in the tefillah, need open with ברוך, while all subsequent blessings conclude with the formula "ברוך אתה ה', Blessed are You, Lord."[14]

Elbogen observed that in the sources we find many blessings which do not, in fact, fit the model of the מעשה ברכה. This fact, he suggested, indicates that the model for the blessing formula enacted by the rabbis developed later than the actual use of the blessing formula itself. Rules stipulating various elements to be included in the berakhah were made later to provide consistency of usage, but variations which existed prior to such rules continued to exist.[15] Dr. Heinemann has shown, further, that the formula ברוך אתה ה' was not the only formula of its kind which was extant in early rabbinic times. The מעשה שאול which tradition has bequeathed to us conform to rabbinic rules for blessings, but other patterns did exist, as for example, the pattern ברוך אתה ה', which appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls and, ברוך ה' לעד, which is found in the Hebrew Ben Sirach and is a pattern parallel to ברוך אתה ה'.[16] The talmud itself gives evidence of this process of gradual development of general rules which apply to the berakhah formula. It records various holdings such as those which maintain that blessings which do not mention the name of God, שם, and his kingship, מלכות are not berakhot.[17]

The earliest sources which prescribe elements of what became the statutory liturgy date from the Tannaitic period. In Mishna Berakhot 1:2, we find stipulated the elements which comprise the rubric of statutory worship known as the קריאת שמע, the recitation of the sh'ma. The sh'ma itself consists of three Biblical passages, Deuteronomy 6:4-6 and 11:13:21, and Numbers 15:37-41. The Mishna provides that these verses are to be encased, as it were, in blessings. In the morning two blessings are prescribed before and one after; in the evening, two before and two after. The texts of the blessings were not fixed, though their thematic content was. This is evidenced by the existence of two parallel texts of the ahavah blessing, which Elbogen holds to be of Temple origin. Both texts, אהבה רבה and אהבת עולם are recorded by the Talmud as existing side by side; they are different in wording yet identical in content.[18]

We also have an important, but enigmatic Talmudic source regarding the tefillah or, as it is also called, the שמונה עשרה, the 18 blessings. In Berakhot 28b, we learn that Simeon haPakuli " סדרן ", ordered or arranged eighteen blessings before Rabban Gamaliel at Yavne. The interpretation given this text is the subject of much scholarly debate. Finkelstein gives this passage as the key source to support his view that the tefillah was composed at one time by a central authority.[19] Elbogen and Heinemann, however, hold that this enactment before Rabban Gamaliel was but a stage in a developmental process. At this point, they hold, the sages merely

codified a specific order and thematic structure for the blessings, variations of which had been current for some time and were used in synagogue worship.

Before the rabbis gave such structure to the practice of reciting various blessings in regular public worship and made that worship mandatory, there existed many blessings of similar content side by side. They were used according to individual choice and local custom whenever such a blessing were necessary. As evidence for this view, Heinemann himself presents some twenty-six contemporaneous variations of the blessing for Jerusalem, בונה ירושלים.[20]

In summary, the conclusion of Heinemann and Elbogen is that in the early period of prayer development, there were no specific word requirements for the blessings. Rather, flexibility obtained. Certain elements came to be included in similar blessings, and as these formulations grew more popular, they became the accepted usage. Only then did the sages coin specific elements which they required for the blessings in order to achieve consistency and uniformity of practice.

That this process actually operated as both Heinemann and Elbogen rightly posit can be seen from two examples. First, in regard to the blessing following the Biblical sections of the morning recitation of the sh'ma, the discussion in the Jerusalem Talmud is instructive. We find that different rabbis require the inclusion of certain specific elements in this blessing:

> He who recites the sh'ma in the morning must mention the exodus from Egypt in the גאולה (the ברכה blessing). Rabbi says: One must mention גאולה שלמה in it. Others say: One must mention the parting of the Red Sea and the smiting of the first born. Rabbi Joshua b. Levi says: One must mention them all and also say 'Rock of Israel and his redeemer.'[21]

Here we see how the various elements of the blessing move from variable to fixed until the final determination by Joshua b. Levi that all of the elements must be included. Elbogen argues that the similarity of the texts of this blessing among the various rites testifies to its having been codified relatively early by the sages.[22]

Our own research provides another example of this developmental process, although it concerns a prayer of slightly later codification. Corresponding to the reader's recitation of the blessing of thanksgiving in the tefillah, there developed the custom of the congregation's simultaneous recitation of a parallel blessing which was called modim d'rabbanan. In the Talmudic discussion of this prayer, the gradual crystallization process is clearly demonstrated. There are different versions of the prayer preferred by various rabbis. In the Babylonian Talmud, Sota 40a, each text is quoted: Rav says: "מודים אנחנו לך שאתה הוא יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, We give thanks to You, O Lord our God, because we are able to give thanks." Samuel prays, "אלהי כל בשר, אלהי כל בשר שאנו מודים לך, God of all flesh, seeing that we give You thanks." R. Simai says: "יוצרנו יוצר כל הבריות, יוצר בראשית שאנו מודים לך, Our creator and creator of all things in the beginning, seeing that we give You thanks." The men of Nehardea

said in the name of R. Simai: הכבוד והגבורה לשמך הגדול על שהחייתנו וקיימתנו על שאנו מודים לך

Blessings and thanksgiving to Your great Name because You kept us in life and sustained us, seeing that we give thanks to You." And finally, R. Aha b. Jacob concluded his modim d'rabbanan prayer thusly:

כן תחיינו ותחננו ותקבץ גליותינו לחצרות קדשך לשמור חוקיך ולעשות רצונך בלבב שלם על שאנו מודים לך

So may You continue to keep us alive and be gracious to us, and gather us together and assemble our exiles to Your holy courts to observe Your statutes and to do Your will with a perfect heart, seeing that we give thanks to You."

The various renditions thus stated, the Talmud concludes with the decision given by Rav Papa. Rav Papa requires that all of these versions be included in the modim d'rabbanan prayer; his dictum fixed the text of what had been a flexible prayer by requiring that it include all the elements which various rabbis had included in their own modim d'rabban prayers. The Jerusalem Talmud, in its consideration of this prayer displays the same process. Various versions are given, and the final decision, stated by R. Judan is that "the sages were accustomed to say them all." Recognized, however, is the custom of some rabbis to recite only one or another of the versions; the final rule is that one should not spend too much time on this prayer.[23]

The process of the development of a fixed liturgy, then, was a

gradual one; it took place throughout the Talmudic period. Prayers at first were spoken spontaneously; certain forms and patterns became popular and accepted. The usages were then codified; rules and requirements were enacted to bring consistency and uniformity to Jewish worship. In the early development, much flexibility was still allowed; the requirement of specific prayer texts was a rather late phenomenon. Within the fixed liturgy, there remained freedom to innovate and to expand. Even after the formal arrangement of the blessings of the tefillah in the generation of Rabban Gamaliel, this freedom in large measure remained. Indeed, R. Simeon warned against the routinization of one's devotion, and R. Eliezer maintained that mere mechanical recitation of prayers was unacceptable. Rava, Rav Joseph, and R. Aḥa, speaking for R. Yosi, all held that one should add a new element to the tefillah whenever he prayed. R. Abahu would add a new blessing daily; R. Eliezer reportedly prayed a whole new tefillah each day.[24]

But, as time passed, this flexibility diminished. The rabbis began to make more explicit textual requirements for the blessings of the statutory liturgy. As we observed with the [illegible], and modim d'rabbanan prayers, the rabbis gradually increased the number of elements required for the blessings to be acceptable. Later Amoraim further fixed the content and wording of the blessings. The process is exemplified in this Amoraic passage:

> Rabba said: In the recitation of the sh'ma and the hallel (one concludes) ' [illegible] ' who redeemed Israel. ' In the tefillah, ' [illegible] '

,redeemer of Israel.' R. Zeira said: In the kiddush (one says) ' , make us holy through His commandments,' In the tefillah, ' , make us holy through Your commandments.' Rava b. Shila said: In the tefillah, ' , who causes the horn of salvation to sprout forth,' In the haftarah (blessing), ' , shield of David.' [25]

Heinemann describes this process of incorporation as an unconscious process. The rabbis used and then required prayers which went well, which were popularly accepted. Phrases used in one prayer would become part of the general prayer vocabulary and be used in other prayers.[26] There was no hesitancy to use accepted phrases in new prayer compositions; this phenomenon is particularly evident in the private prayer of the rabbis. Phrases and thoughts which were known to them from the fixed liturgy were used freely by the rabbis in their personal prayer expressions, as we shall observe later. The statutory liturgy became fixed and codified in its final form only in the Gaonic period; from Masekhet Sopherim we learn of the writing down of prayer texts in the sixth century.[27]

Turning from the development of the form of the fixed liturgy to the content of the statutory prayers, we find that there is liturgical emphasis on the key tenets of Jewish belief. The k'riat sh'ma deals with the unity of God and the acceptance of the yoke of His commandments. The blessings which surround it affirm God as the Creator of the universe, as a revealing God who loves Israel, and makes His love manifest in His gift of Torah, and testify to God's role in the destiny of Israel, affirming

Him as Israel's redeemer. Other key tenets of Jewish belief are affirmed in the tefillah, including repentence, the election of Israel, God's providence, the merit of the fathers, the hope for national restoration and the Messianic future.

Elbogen maintains that the tefillah, from its inception, was a public prayer. Some of the blessings of the tefillah originate from the Temple; as such, they were, of necessity, public prayers. At the outset, Elbogen argues, the congregation merely answered "amen" to the blessings as they were recited by the leader. Later Rabban Gamaliel decreed that each person himself should recite the blessings of the tefillah. The reader's repetition of the tefillah was instituted to maintain its public character.[28]

The tefillah, technically is classified as a prayer of petition, but it combines elements of praise, thanksgiving and supplication. It consists of three parts: the first three blessings, the middle blessings, and the last three blessings. The former are most clearly prayers of praise. First is the avot blessing, dealing with the merit of the fathers. The second blessing, g'vurot, praises the mighty deeds of God and affirms His involvement in the affairs of man. The third blessing, the Sanctification of the Name, kedushat ha-shem, affirms God's holiness.

The intermediate section for weekdays consists of a series of petitions. Elbogen has observed that it is difficult to categorize the petitions and that the transitions among them from general to personal are not orderly. Two of the last three blessings, which are supposed

to be prayers of thanksgiving, have supplicatory quality. Talmudic reconciliation of this problem is attempted, but it is not satisfactory. This, Elbogen maintains, supports the contention that not all of the elements of the tefillah were composed at one time.[29]

The content of the intermediate blessings is varied; included are national and personal petitions. The personal petitions request knowledge, acceptance of repentence, forgiveness, healing, acceptance of prayer. The general or national requests include petitions for a good year, redemption, gathering of the exiles, defeat of Israel's enemies, blessing for the righteous converts, rebuilding of Jerusalem, restoration of judges, sacrificial worship, and the Davidic dynasty.

The intermediate blessings are omitted on the Sabbath and festivals. On these occasions a blessing called kedushat ha-yom, sanctification of the day, is recited. Special blessings are also prescribed for Rosh Ha Shana, Yom Kippur, and public fast days.

The final blessings of the tefillah are generally held to be among the most ancient elements of the liturgy. They, like the first three blessings, are mentioned by name in the Mishna: " עבודה, sacrifice (later amended to restoration of sacrifice);" " הודאה, thanksgiving;" and " ברכת כהנים, priestly blessing." The latter is a prayer for peace which might have been a response of the congregation to the blessing of the priests in the Temple.[30]

The statutory liturgy covers a broad range of prayer themes and is marked by a uniformity of form and style. The berakhah formula is

its predominant characteristic. Other characteristics of the fixed liturgy have been identified by Dr. Heinemann. He observes that the blessings are all rather brief; they employ simple language, and they are uncomplicated in structure. In general, each blessing treats but one subject; the subject is summarized or restated in the ḥatimah at the end of the blessing. The blessings have no prolonged or festive style, nor do any of them display characteristics of hymns or doxologies. Rhyme is negligible. Hyperbole and exageration are absent, as are, for the most part, elements of the esoteric. Absent, too, are any apocalyptic elements. There is little repetition and almost no poetic adornment to be found among the blessings of the statutory liturgy.

Often in the fixed liturgy, as we remarked previously, Biblical wording and phraseology are used. The rabbis, however, do not hesitate to rewrite Biblical phrases, especially to make changes of number of person. We find in the fixed liturgy some use of Biblical parallelism and some borrowing of Biblical rhythms. Apparent, too, is a tendency for the rabbis to prefer Scriptural syntax in prayer to the syntax of Rabbinic Hebrew. Thus we often find use of the relative pronoun, אשר, instead of ש ; the vav consecutive, as in the phrase ויאמר לאמר, and use of Bible words in prayer where in other rabbinic texts later forms of such words would be used: for example, נתן for יהב, and מלכי מלכי המלכים for מלכא מלכיא.[32]

In the prayers of the fixed liturgy, and not, as we shall see in many of the private prayers, the rabbis address God directly. God is

the subject of the petitionary verb; the command form of the verb is usually employed. When, however, the blessing opens with a description or object, then the verb usually appears in the future tense: " רפאנו ה' ונרפא הושיענו ונושעה " or " ברך עלינו ה' אלהינו את השנה הזאת ". In blessings opening with ברוך, there frequently follows a series of verbs in participle form, or there follows the relative pronoun אשר and then verbs in the past tense. Non-petitionary blessings which do not open with ברוך often commence with the second person, past tense form of the verb and the second person pronoun as in אתה חוננתנו or אתה בחרתנו. Heinemann has observed that no prayer in the fixed liturgy, except the alphabetical acrostic אדון עולם, begins with the second person past tense without use of the pronoun אתה.[33]

Heinemann further points out a common pattern whereby a blessing is often expanded. This pattern consists of a statement of justification supporting the petition. The statement usually employs the words " כי אתה , For You are" as an introduction to the sentence and links itself to the key verb in the hatimah. An example of this kind of expansion phrase is the phrase " כי אתה שומע תפלת עמך ישראל ברחמים, For You hear the prayers of Your people Israel in mercy," in the שומע תפלה blessing. In some prayers these כי אתה phrases serve as pegs whereby the petitioner hangs his hope and trust in God, which is the

basis for the petition. Sometimes the expanding statement will employ a Scriptural quotation introduced by the words כדכתיב שנאמר or כאמור. These verses are used to demonstrate, כדכתיב, that there is proper basis to address God in a particular matter. The use of statements of justification and Bible quotations to indicate a standing to petition God is minimal within the fixed liturgy, but the practice is prominent within the realm of private rabbinic prayer, especially in those prayers which employ the pattern of the courtroom.

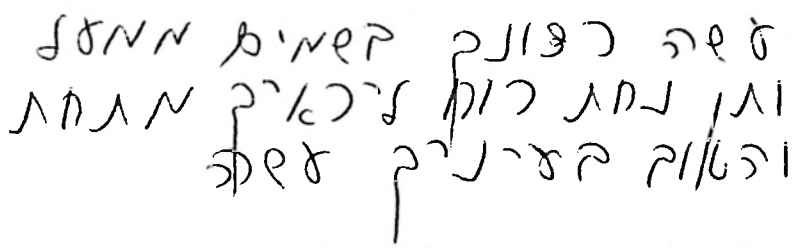
In the fixed liturgy God is addressed and referred to by the terms אל and אלהינו. Use of other rabbinic appellations for deity is avoided. Blessings are all couched in the plural.[34]

Heinemann asserts that, in the prayers of the statutory liturgy, the worshipper neither relies upon his own merits nor seeks a reward. Rather he relies upon God's mercy and lovingkindness and upon the precedents of God's gracious dealings in the past. Even the blessing concerning the merit of the fathers, Heinemann insists, is merely a plea that God remember their merit in judging their children. He further maintains that the זכות אבות sought in the מגן אברהם blessing refers not to reward but to ישועה, salvation. Prayers which confront God with demands are not part of the fixed liturgy. Such prayers do exist in Jewish liturgical tradition, but they belong to the realm of private prayer. The patterns of the courtroom or slave/master prayer are absent from the fixed liturgy though, as we shall see, they are common to private worship.[35]

We have observed the process whereby the once highly flexible public worship of Israel gradually developed into a rigid prayer regimen. The order, content, and the wording of the blessings became fixed and were made mandatory. Yet even as this crystallization process continued toward rigidity, the structure still provided an outlet for individual expression in worship. At one stage in the development of the liturgy it was customary for an individual to offer his personal supplications within the tefillah itself. The Jerusalem Talmud records the practice: "The rabbis say... a man may request his needs in (the blessing) שומע תפלה, who hears prayer.'" Further, Rav is quoted as approving the practice whereby one might make his personal supplication at the end of each and every blessing. He is also quoted by R. Ḥiyya as making two specific suggestions. First, even though the sages say that personal supplications are to be made in the שומע תפלה blessing, Rav maintains that if one has a sick person in his own house, he should pray for his welfare in the blessing for healing the sick. Secondly, Rav specifies that one who needs sustenance or livlihood should make his petition explicit in the ברכנו השנים, the blessing for a good year.[36]

The berakhah formula שומע תפלה was used in compositions of supplicatory prayer. Evidence of this practice has come down to us in the texts of several abbreviated forms of the tefillah, including those which were recited in places of danger, and in the tefillah ha-derekh, a prayer prescribed for the traveler to recite before

he commences his journey. An example of such prayers is the prayer of R. Eliezer:



> Do Your will in heaven above, and grant relief to them that fear You below, and do that which is good in Your eyes. Blessed are You, O Lord, who hears prayer.[37]

Heinemann states that the hatimah " , who hears prayer," remained in regular use as a conclusion for tahanun prayers until the practice was supressed by the later halakhic codifiers.[38]

The practice of including individual petitions within the tefillah, though not fully uprooted, did fall from favor during Talmudic times. Instead, there developed a custom for the individual to recite his personal supplications immediately after the recitation of the tefillah: "One does not say anything after , but after the tefillah he may say anything, even as long as the confession for the Day of Atonement."[39] The prayers recited after the tefillah were called tahanun, prayers of supplication. Many of these personal petitions composed by various rabbis have been preserved for us in the Talmuds, and some have found their way into the siddur. We shall later consider these prayers in detail, comparing them in content and style to the fixed liturgy.

There exists within the liturgical tradition a middle ground between the public, statutory prayers and private rabbinic prayer. There are two categories of prayers which occupy this intermediate classification. First is the category which includes blessings which are fixed and required, but which are not public. These are the blessings which are to be recited by the individual at certain occasions: when enjoying a gift of God's bounty, when observing an aspect of God's creation which should evoke a religious response, when performing a certain commandment. Included are such blessings as the birkhot ha-nehenin, blessings associated with the enjoyment of objects of taste and smell.[40] Similarly, blessings prescribed for such occasions as weddings, the birkhot hatanim, and upon the reaching of majority of a son ברוך שפטרני, are in this category. Finally, many of the so-called "short blessings" which have been incorporated into the birkhot ha-shaḥar are of this type. Most of these blessings are found in Berakhot 60b and are prescribed for the individual to recite after completing such acts as hearing the cock crow, washing and dressing himself, going to the bathroom, etc.[41]

The second category of these intermediate prayers consists of those prayers which include blessings which depart from the standard berakhah rules and are not part of the original core of the statutory liturgy. Such prayers were originally optional prayers; in time they became attached to the statutory worship and assumed a residual obligatory status. In this category are such prayers as אלקי נשמה from the birkhot ha shaḥar; the mourners blessings, the birkhot ha-avelim,

and the tefillat ha derekh. These prayers do not open with הכוך, but do close with הכוך, an exception to the Talmudic rules for the berakhah structure.

Heinemann suggests that these prayers and others like them were composed prior to the codification of the rules for formulation of the berakhot. In time rabbinic legislation successfully prevented unnecessary blessings, required that all blessings must mention both God's name and his kingdom, and required that all blessings open with הכוך.[42] The blessings in this category which do not conform to the rules antedate them and were so well accepted by the people that the later rabbis were unable to uproot them. And so they remain in the liturgy as exceptions to the berakhah rules. An additional conjecture about such blessings, is that the rules for berakhot were intended originally to apply only to the core of the mandatory liturgy and not to other blessings.[43] However, it is clear that the berakhah formula was rarely used outside of the statutory prayer. In most of the cases where the formula was used, the prayers were ancillary to public worship and later became tied to it or became required for recitation by individuals.

The intermediate categories of rabbinic prayer do not exhaust individual prayer expression in the Talmudic period. For as the fixed liturgy was developing and crystallizing, beyond that liturgy and divergent from it, there was a significant outpouring of personal prayer. The Talmud and Midrash preserve that wealth of personal prayer

expression. These private prayers were offered by the rabbis at various times, in various situations, and in various ways, They display new themes and patterns and enrich the liturgical heritage bequeathed to us by the rabbis. But before we consider the private prayer of the rabbis in detail, let us first ask why the rabbis felt a need to offer these prayers. Why was the fixed liturgy insufficient for them?

One compelling reason for the outpouring of private prayer is that the religious person is never content with mere repetition of prayers composed by others, no matter how sacred, how beloved, how inspiring those prayers might be. The religious man has an impulse, a need to express himself in prayer. Even if he takes the thoughts of familiar prayers and reworks them into his own words, he, in so doing, adds an important touch of self, an expression of his own personality to his prayer.

Secondly, the fixed liturgy, despite its breadth, could not and did not provide adequate prayer expression for every occasion, every need, every hope, every sorrow which would evoke prayer. The very generality of the fixed liturgy and its essentially plural, group-oriented expression is an additional factor which motivated personal expression in private prayer. In private prayer the needs of the individual are expressed with greater specificity. Even the expression of group hopes are more personalized in their connection to an individual and his time and place situation. Finally, liturgical expression is not and can never become a closed matter. For the religious man always, somehow, has something more -- petition, praise, aspiration -- to express.

CHAPTER III

SOME FORM CHARACTERISTICS OF PRIVATE PRAYER

The private prayer of the rabbis, by its very nature as personal religious expression, is characterized by vastly greater variety of style and content than the berakhot which comprise the fixed and required Jewish liturgy. Yet despite the variety which we find in this realm of rabbinic prayer expression, there emerge from our study of the private prayers of the rabbis various common elements, stimilarities of form, pattern, language, style, and even of content which are used over and over. For the rabbis, in expressing themselves in prayer, did not create de novo. They rather inclined toward use of familiar forms and patterns which were integral parts of their religious vocabulary and thought; they used forms and phrases which had gained the acceptance and sanctity of tradition and popular use and which, thus, could be comfortably fit into their own private devotions.

We are not surprised to find that in the realm of private prayer there appears a style of praise of thanksgiving prayer which closely parallels the berakhah pattern of statutory worship. Indeed, several alternative parallels are found in the private prayers. One such form opens with the word "baruch, blessed" and continues with a clause which refers to God in the third person and which specifies the act of deity which motivates the prayer. Absent are the words "atah adonai, are You" which characterize the formal liturgical berakhah. Typical of this private prayer form is the prayer of R. Judah b. Illai, spoken when he wrapped himself in his cloak: ברוך שעטני מצ'ר, Blessed is He who enraps me in a cloak."[1] So also the prayer of

Simeon Ben Zoma when he observed people crowded together on the Temple Mount: " ברוך שברא כל אלו לשמשני; Blessed is He who created all these to serve me."[2] And the pattern is fit, similarly, by the blessing prescribed by R. Eleazar to be recited by one whose son has reached majority: " ברוך שפטרני מעונשו של זה; Blessed is He who has freed me from the responsibility of this (child)."[3]

A second alternative to the liturgical berakhah found among the private prayers is a pattern which employs the word baruch followed again by a clause referring to God, but referring to him by use of one of the standard rabbinic appellations, such as " המקום, the Omnispresent." The pattern continues with reference to the act or quality of God which elicits the prayer. Examples of prayers of this type are the alternative formulations to liturgical blessings over bread and figs which were deemed acceptable by the rabbis: " כמה נאה פת זו, ברוך המקום שבראה, How pleasant is this bread! Blessed be the Omnipresent who created it." " כמה נאה תאנה זו, ברוך המקום שבראה, How pleasant is this fig! Blessed be the Omnipresent who created it!"[4]

A combination of both these alternatives to the berakhah is still another pattern, and it is exemplified by the prayer recited by a man upon his seeing a beautiful pillar:

ברוך רחמך שנתת מאתנו נאה כמוהו
ברוך המקום שחפץ בכך וברא לפיכך
אשרי העולם שהקב"ה מלוי בו

Blessed be He who created the source whence this was hewn. Blessed be He who hewed it and created it by a word. Happy are you, O world, that the Holy One Blessed Be He rules over you.[5]

These two patterns, unlike the berakhah form which they parallel, also appear in Aramaic. The first pattern is seen in these prayers, where God is blessed for his creating wheat and bread:

בריך דבריה דהדין חיטתא

Blessed is He who created this wheat crop.[6]

בריך מרי דהאי פיתא

Blessed is the Master of this bread.[7]

The second alternative pattern, which uses the Aramaic appellation "רחמנא, the All Merciful," in reference to God, appears in the prayer uttered by R. Hanna of Bagdad and other rabbis when they visited Rav Judah who had recovered from a serious illness:

בריך רחמנא דיהבך לנא ולא יהיבך לעפרא

Blessed be the All Merciful who has given you back to us and has not given you to the dust.[8]

A similar example is the prayer of Rav Nachman offered when, after his insulting treatment of R. Ishmael, Abdan was stricken with leprosy:

בריך רחמנא דכסיך לעבדן
בהאי עלמא

Blessed be the All Merciful who has put Abdan to shame in this world (that atonement thus be made for him to enter into the world to come).[9]

These private prayer patterns which employ the word "ברוך" its Aramaic equivalent "בריך" are found frequently in the Talmud and Midrash. But they are neither the most frequent nor most

important private prayer patterns. For they, by their language and nature, are most appropriate for prayers of blessing, thanksgiving, or praise. They do not lend themselves well to the expression of petition, and petition is one of the key motives for private rabbinic prayer.

By contrast, the most common form of opening or address found among the private prayers of petition is particularly suited for petitionary prayer. That formula is יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהי ואלהי, May it be Your will O Lord my God;" in an abbreviated form, יהי רצון, and in Aramaic, יהא רעוא קדמך or יהא רעוא דלהון. The יהי רצון formula for petition is especially appropriate for supplicatory prayer, for it conveys both a sense of humility and a willingness to depend on the will of God, while it expresses the devout hope that the human and divine wills might coincide. Thus, we note in the following two prayers:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו שלא
נחטא ולא נביש ולא נכלם מאבותינו

May it be Your will, O Lord our God, that we not sin, nor be put to shame, nor bring disgrace upon our fathers.[9a]

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהי שתכניסני
לעיר זו בשלום

May it be Your will, O Lord my God, to cause me to enter this city in peace.[10]

Dr. Joseph Heinemann has observed that, of all the common forms of address used in private rabbinic prayer, the יהי רצון formula is most suited for use as introduction to petition. He notes that such direct forms of addressing God as "רבונו של עולם, Lord

of all worlds," or " רבונו של עולם, Master of the Universe," require for petition continuation with a clause which employs the command form of the verb. The יהי רצון formula, however, easily continues with the second person future form of the verb, giving a more polite, respectful and less direct form of request. The יהי רצון formula for petition is thus a more modest form of request than a direct petition which is used, in private prayer, generally only in times of distress and in the public prayer of the statutory liturgy.[11]

The rabbis, who required that petition be preceded by prayers of praise in the statutory liturgy, did not extend this requirement to the realm of private prayer. This fact seems explained best in the light of practical considerations. For the average person would not likely have either the poetic skill or vocabulary at his ready command, nor would he have the time at his disposal to preface his personal prayer. This would seem to be the case especially if the prayer was elicited by deep personal need, burden, or distress or a particularly urgent situation. The יהי רצון formula, which by its nature humbly asks only that the divine will coincide with the individual petition, obviates the need for praise of God as introduction while avoiding a tone of presumptiousness before God.[12]

The יהי רצון formula is a flexible one. It usually introduces petition, but, it may also be used to append a request element to prayer whose essential theme is praise or thanksgiving:

מודה אני לפניך שהכנסתני בשלום
יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהי שתוציאני
מכאן בשלום

I gratefully acknowledge before You that You caused me to enter in peace. May it be Your will, O Lord my God, to bring me forth from this city in peace. [13]

The יהי רצון pattern is also freely used in prayers of confession to append a petition for forgiveness; the confession of R. Hamnuna is exemplary:

אלהי עד שלא נוצרתי אינו כדאי
ועכשיו שנוצרתי כאילו לא נוצרתי עפר
אני בחיי קל וחומר במיתתי הרי אני
לפניך ככלי מלא קושי וכלמה
יהי רצון מלפניך שלא אחטא עוד ומה
שחטאתי מחוק ברחמיך הרבים אבל
לא על ידי יסורין

My God, before I was formed I was unworthy. Now that I have been formed I am as if I had never been formed. Dust I am in my life; how much the more so in my death. Behold, before You I am like a vessel full of shame and disgrace.

May it be Your will that I not sin. And blot out in Your great mercy that which I have sinned, but not through suffering. [14]

There are other formulas of opening and address which appear frequently among the private prayers of the rabbis. We have already noted the formulas " רבונו של עולם, Master of the Universe," and " רבון כל העולמים, Lord of all Worlds," which introduce direct petitions to God. These appear most frequently in prayers whose pattern is that of the courtroom. Other direct petitions, usually quite brief, are introduced by reference to God as

"father" and "king": " אבינו מלכנו ; Our Father our King;" " אבינו שבשמים , Our Father in Heaven." Thus begins Rabbi Akiba's fast day supplication: " אבינו מלכנו למענך כמה חנינו , Our Father, Our King, for Your sake, have mercy upon us."[15]

The linguistic style of the private prayers of the rabbis generally is the same as that of the statutory prayer. There are differences in style and content, but the private prayers are composed with the same simplicity of language and general absence of hymnological or payetanic adornments. The language in private prayer, in contrast to the fixed liturgy, exhibits a varied use of both singular and plural. The Talmud does record attempts to pluralize language in private prayer. R. Jacob speaking in the name of Rav Ḥisda prescribes a prayer to be recited by one setting out on a journey. The prayer is in the singular:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהי שתולני לשלום ... והצעידני לשלום ...

> May it be Your will, O Lord my God, to cause me to go in peace and to direct my steps in peace....

Abaye demurs, insisting that the prayer be recited in the plural:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו שתולכנו לשלום והצעידנו לשלום

> May it be Your will, O Lord my God, to cause us to go in peace and to direct our steps in peace.

Abaye concludes with a general principle: A man should always associate himself with the community.[16] Similarly, with reference to the blessing after meals, a public prayer, Samuel holds that a man should never exclude himself from the group.[17]

Yet despite these expressed halakha preferences for private prayer in the plural, a great many of the rabbis' private prayers are, nonetheless, in the singular. Indeed, it seems that the very nature of private prayer would indicate a preference for the singular, more personal language. For most of the private prayers were utterances of feelings and petitions felt so deeply by their authors that it would have been unnatural, if not impossible, for them to express them in the plural. The prayer of Rabbi Judah Ha Nasi on his death bed is an example of such intensely personal prayer:

רבש"ע
שגלוי וידוע לפניך שיגעתי בתורה
בעשרה אצבעותי ולא נהניתי באחת
מהן יהי רצון מלפניך שיהא שלום במיטתי

Master of the Universe! It is revealed and known before You that I have toiled in the Torah with my ten fingers and have not received joy with even one finger. May it be Your will that there be peace in my rest.[18]

So, too, the prayer which Rabbi Nehunia regularly offered before commencing his instruction in the Bet Ha Midrash requires the use of the singular:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהי שלא ירגיל
תקלה על ידי ולא אכשל בדבר הלכה וישמחו
בי חבירי ולא אומר טמא טהור ולא טהור
טמא ולא יכשלו חבירי בדבר הלכה וישמח בהם

May it be Your will O Lord my God that no offense occur through me and that I may not fail in a matter of halakha; that my colleagues may rejoice in me and that I may not say of the impure that it is pure, or of the pure that it is impure, and that my colleagues may not fail in a halakhic matter and that I might rejoice in them.[19]

Other prayers, however, among rabbinic private devotions are more general in nature and in their situation and, thus, use plural forms easily. The prayer which Rav Ḥiyya offered after completing his tefillah was both personal to him and applicable to all Israel:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו שתשים תורתך
אומנתנו ואל יהיו עיננו ולבנו יחשכו ושיננו

> May it be Your will O Lord our God that Your Torah be our craft, that our hearts be not somber nor our eyes darkened.[20]

Another private prayer, which is both personal petition and prayer in behalf of others of Israel, using the plural is the prayer of R. Ḥiyya b. Abba:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו ואלהי
אבותינו שתתן בלבנו לעשות תשובה
שלמה שלא נבוש ונכלם מאבותינו
שבעולם הבא

> May it be Your will O Lord our God and God of our fathers to put it into our hearts to do complete repetance that we not be disgraced before our fathers in the world to come.[21]

And it was this prayer which R. Yudan b. R. Ishamel prayed whenever he had completed his teaching.[22]

None of the blessings of the tefillah are in Aramaic. But the Mishna specifies that the tefillah may be recited in any language.[23] The Talmud explains that the tefillah is supplication, a plea for mercy addressed to God, and, as such, one may pray it in any language he knows. Thus he would always be able to express the needs and desires which he might wish to set before God. Rav Judah b. Ezekiel demurrs, however, holding that a man should never ask his needs in Aramaic.

The contradiction is resolved by the holding that the tefillah of the community may indeed be recited in any language, but that when an individual prays privately, his prayer should be in the Hebrew language.[24]

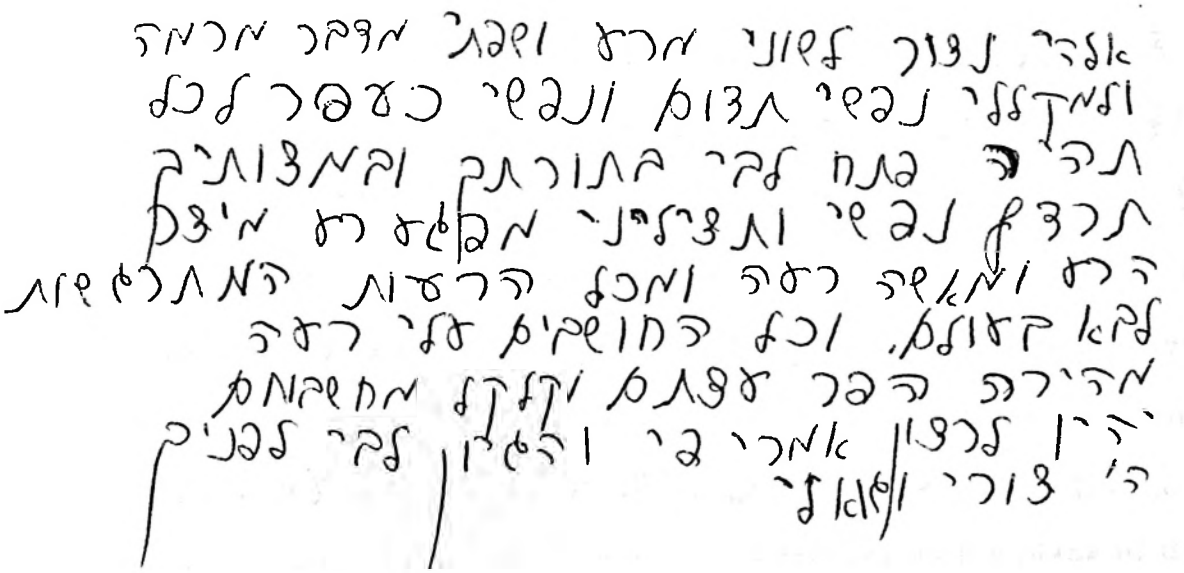
Another precedent concerning the permissibility of using Aramaic in personal prayer occurs in the Talmud in reference to the prayer offered by Rabbi Eleazar when he inquired about a sick person: "המקום ירחמינך לשלום"; The Omnipresent remember you in peace." In objection, a holding of Rav. Judah that no petition is to be made in Aramaic is cited. It is argued that this particular prayer is improper since the ministering angels do not understand Aramaic. But the contradiction is resolved with the holding that, in the case of sick people, the שכינה, the divine presence itself is present at the sick bed.[25]

Despite the clear implication of these precedents that the use of Hebrew is preferable in private prayer, we do find frequent use of Aramaic in private prayers. We cite but two of many examples; First is the prayer offered by Rav Papa that his argumentative student Rav Shimi not bring shame upon him: "רחמנא לשזבן מכובא בשימי", "May the All Merciful save me from being put to shame through Shimi."[26] Similarly the prayer of Levi b. Sisi:

רבון העולמים
גלוי וידוע לפניך שמי
אלהי - ואלהי אבותי
Lord of all Worlds! If one word from this book of the Torah has been nullified, let them come upon us (the Roman soldiers); if not -- let them go away.[27]

In private prayer the use of Aramaic is not infrequent, but the vast majority of the prayers in this category of worship are in Hebrew. The Hebrew style of these prayers is, in general, the same style of rabbinic Hebrew, לשון חז"ל, combined with certain Biblical preferences in usage that we found to be characteristic of the statutory liturgy.[28] Freehof has shown that the private prayers employ even more of the rabbinic idiom than does the fixed liturgy.[29] Such a phenomenon follows logically from the nature of private prayers which, being more personal and less formal, would tend to employ the kind of language regularly used by the rabbis who prayed them.

Freehof has observed too, that the rabbis borrow freely Biblical phrases and use them intact or with changes that render them more suitable for their use in prayer. This same phenomenon we have previously observed in the prayers of the fixed liturgy. The prayer of Mar b. Rabina is particularly rich in its use of Biblical language, and Freehof gives a detailed examination of the Biblical influences:



> O God, keep my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceit. And to those who curse me, let my soul be silent, and let my soul to all be as dust. Open my heart in your Torah, and let my soul pursue Your commandments. And save me from evil occurrence, from the evil inclination, from an evil woman, and from all the evils which are stirred up to come into the world. And as for all those who plan evil against me, foil their plan and thwart their plot. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable before You, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.[30]

The opening phrase, "אלהי נצור לשוני מרע ושפתי מדבר מרמה," O God, keep my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceit," is based on Psalm 34:14; the next phrase, "ולמקללי נפשי תדום, let my soul be silent," appears to be influenced by the phrase in Psalm 131:2, "אם לא שויתי ודוממתי נפשי, I have quieted my soul," which also refers to humility. Freehof holds that the next phrase, "ונפשי כעפר לכל תהיה," let my soul to all be as dust," is influenced by Psalm 119:25, "דבקה לעפר נפשי, my soul cleaves to the dust." He suggests that the phrase "ובמצותיך תרדוף נפשי, may my soul pursue Your commandments," shows the same sense of pursuing God's commandments as found in the following verses: "צדק צדק תרדף, Justice, justice, you shall pursue (Deut. 16:20)"; "רדפי צדק, pursuers of justice (Isaiah 51:1);" and "בקש שלום ורדפהו, seek peace and pursue it (Psalm 34:15)." The phrase "והפר עצתם וקלקל מחשבותם, foil their counsel and thwart their plot" seems clearly to be based on the phrase from Psalm 33:10: "ה' הפיר עצת גוים הניא מחשבות עמים," The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nought; he frustrates the plans of the

peoples." The closing phrase of Mar's prayer, of course, is a direct quotation from Psalm 19:15.[31]

The influence of Biblical phrases and Biblical language is seen in many of the private prayers of the rabbis, as Freehof demonstrates. Freehof tends, perhaps, to exaggerate the influence. The connection he makes, for example, between בעל תלמדנו and בעל תלמדנו חכם seems a bit forced. And there are, of course, many prayers which display no such influences. Nonetheless, it must be remembered that the rabbis knew most of the Bible by heart, and thus phrases from the Bible and especially the Psalms which were ripe for liturgical use and expression were literally at the tip of their tongues. It would be, indeed, more surprising had we found no such influence of Biblical language in the private devotions of the rabbis.

We have observed up to this point a variety of forms and stylistic patterns which are characteristic of private prayer. Many different forms are found, but there is generally some constancy of usage of the patterns within each of the prayers.

We turn now to a large category of private prayers, within which some of the previously considered forms are found, but which has structural and form characteristics peculiar to itself. That category of private prayer is composed of prayers which bear the indelible stamp of the courtroom.

CHAPTER IV

THE COURTROOM PATTERN IN PRIVATE PRAYER

The entire field of Jewish liturgical study has been significantly enhanced by the excellent and imaginative scholarship of Dr. Joseph Heinemann of the Hebrew University. Dr. Heinemann has pioneered in his application of the method of form criticism to the study of Jewish liturgy. In adopting this form critical method from the study of Bible and New Testament, Dr. Heinemann has uncovered new depths and dimensions within the liturgy which had gone unnoticed by previous scholars. The hallmark of the form critical method is the attempt to isolate and determine various patterns of style and structure -- various forms which appear frequently in the literature, and then to posit the link between those forms and the specific life situations which elicited them or in which they became used.[1] The method not only tells us about the prayers we can easily identify, but, by establishing these patterns which are characteristic of prayers linked to synagogue, court or House of Study, we can, by applying these patterns to various other prayers, identify these prayers according to category. In much of our study of private rabbinic prayer we will employ Heinemann's method; we shall examine various prayer texts and observe how they fit into the prayer patterns which he sets forth.

The most significant prayer pattern which Heinemann has observed among the private prayers of the rabbis is that pattern which has its origin in the pleas of a courtroom setting. In this type of prayer, man stands before God, the Supreme Judge, and pleads his case as would an advocate. Scholars had previously observed the use of the courtroom

pattern in Biblical prayer texts; Prof. Sheldon Blank has shown that Jeremiah addressed God in prayer as a litigant. Jeremiah argued his case; he asserted his own innocence; and, enlarging upon the perfidy of his enemies, he plead for destruction of his adversaries and for a favorable verdict for himself. Jeremiah, Prof. Blank comments, stood before God, as a man stands before a judge.[2]

As found in both Biblical and rabbinic prayer, the characteristics of the courtroom pattern of prayer include: (1) an address to God who is the Supreme Judge before whom the case is to be brought and plead, (2) the setting forth the facts of the case and/or the presentation of the merit which the litigant claims in justification of his plea, and (3) the plea or petition itself, which may be expressed either directly or indirectly.[3]

In rabbinic prayer, the Judge of the Universe is usually addressed as " רבונו של עולם, Master of the Universe" or as " אדון כל העולמים, Lord of all Worlds." The address form is simple and brief; there are no expansions upon or descriptions of God's glory -- which might parallel statements designed to flatter the human judge in an earthly courtroom.

The second section of a prayer of courtroom pattern presents the facts in the case: the complaint is laid bare; the merit (or lack of merit) of the petitioner is set forth; the facts and arguments which justify his petition are presented. In some of these prayers there will be an appeal to precedent or to prior promises of God. There may even appear words of complaint against the Judge, an element

Heinemann rightly points out, which is lacking in other categories of prayers.[4] Often this section of the courtroom prayer is opened with the words " גלוי וידוע לפניך , it is revealed and known to You, " which serve as acknowledgement of the Omniscience of the Supreme Judge and is a modest opening, serving as a "by your leave" request to point out to the Judge certain pertinent facts in the known record by which the petitioner justifies his request.

The third section of the courtroom-pattern prayer is the request, the petition. Indeed, the petition is based upon the propositions expressed in part two. The petition may be expressed explicitly, or it may be implied in the situation which elicits the prayer or the complaint which is set forth in the previous section. The explicit petitions are usually introduced by the familiar " יהי רצון מלפניך , May it be Your will" formula.[5]

The use of the courtroom pattern in rabbinic prayer becomes clear upon analysis of various rabbinic prayers. We consider first the death-bed prayer of Judah Ha Nasi. It opens with the address in characteristic fashion: " רבונו של עולם , Master of the Universe." Next, the facts of the case are presented to God, the presentation being introduced by the גלוי וידוע לפניך שהרי formula:

גלוי וידוע לפניך שיגיעת קשיכ
ועמלתי במורה ולפי לימודי אוכלין
קרוסתה אחת

It is revealed and know to You that these ten fingers have toiled in Torah, yet have not received joy even with one finger.

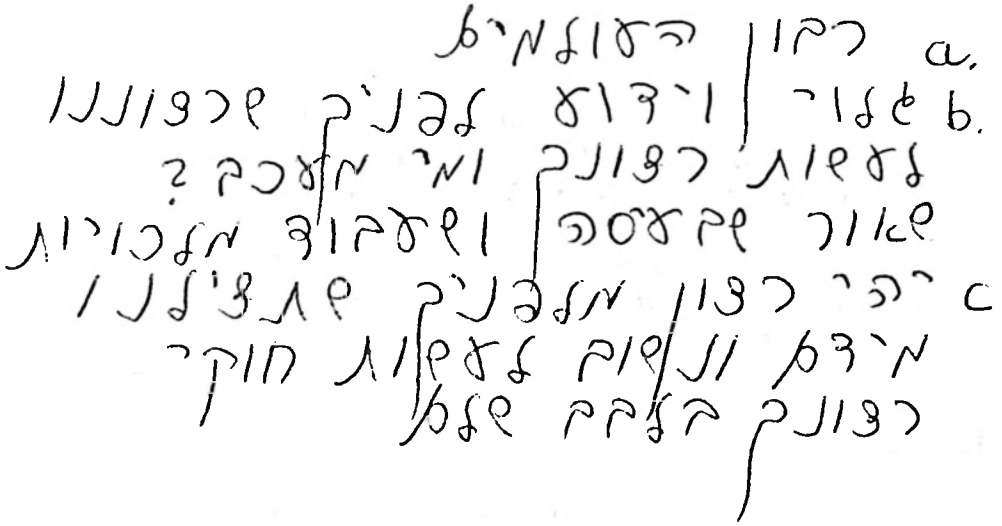
Here the rabbi sets forth before God the facts of his life and the merit which he holds, entitles him to make his plea. Finally, the petition is expressed explicitly: "יהי רצון מלפניך שיכבו מחלוקת שלום, May it be Your will that my rest be peace."[6]

As we examine additional examples of rabbinic prayer of the courtroom model, we shall indicate the different sections of the prayers as follows: "a." signifies the address; "b." signifies the presentation of the case, and "c." represents the petition. Such is the prayer of the son of the daughter of Ḥoni, Ḥanin HaNeḥba. This prayer, which follows the courtroom pattern, is inverted in order, though, as we shall see, all sections appear. Ḥanin is asked by children to pray for rain; he responds:

a. רבון העולם עשה רצונך
c. ועשה
b. שיש בני אדם שאין מבדילין בין אבא שיתן גשמים לאבא שאינו נותן גשמים

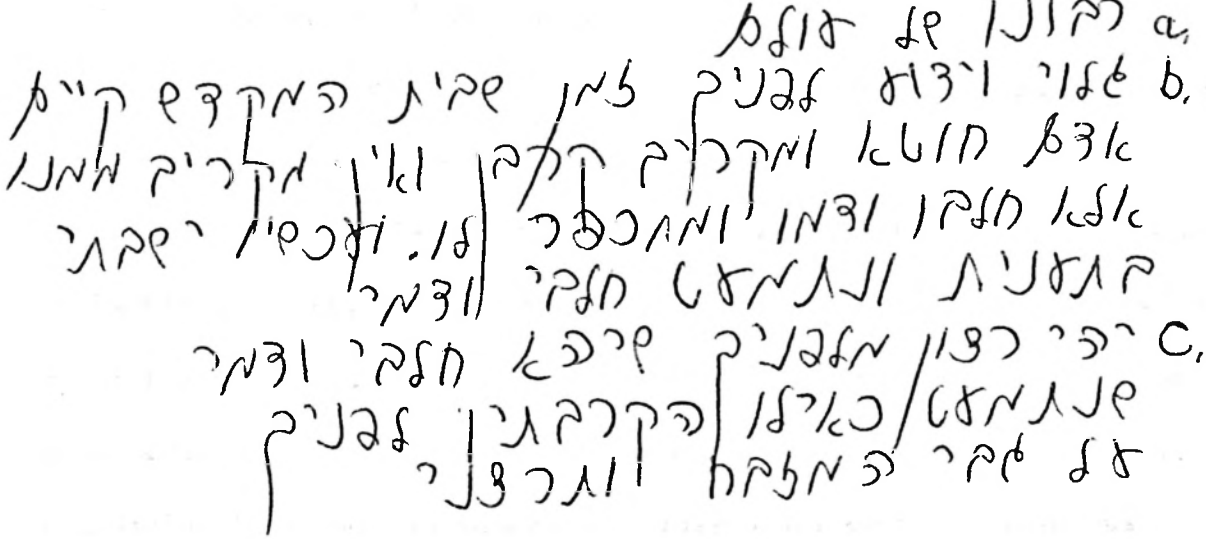
a. Master of the Universe!
c. Act
b. for the sake of those who can't distinguish between the Father who gives rain and the father who does not give rain.[7]

The prayer of Rabbi Alexander also employs the courtroom pattern. Alexander sets forth the facts of man's inability to achieve his intentions to live according to God's will, and then he pleads for God's help in doing so:



a. Lord of all Worlds!
b. It is revealed and known before You that it is our will to do Your will. But what prevents it? The leaven in the dough and servitude to the kingdoms (Rome).
c. May it be Your will to save us from their hand that we may return to do the statutes of Your will with a perfect heart. [8]

The courtroom pattern is exhibited by the prayer of Rav Sheshet during his voluntary fast. He sets forth the fact that, since there is no longer a Temple whose sacrifice makes atonement, he is fasting to make atonement. He petitions that his fast be as acceptable as a sacrifice in the Temple would have been:



a. Lord of all Worlds!
b. It is revealed and known to You that when there existed a temple, a man would sin and then offer a sacrifice, but he offered from it only its fat and its blood, and it would atone for him. Thus now I have sat in a fast and my fat and blood are diminished.
c. May it be Your will that my fat and my blood which are diminished be as if I had sacrificed it before You on the altar, and accept me.[9]

We notice that the "b" section sets forth both historical facts and personal deed as justification for the request.

Here, too, we may comment further about the רבון כל העולמים formula, to which we alluded earlier, which often serves as introduction to the second section of the prayers. The formula seems to be a conceit acknowledging the omniscience of God, the Supreme Judge, while at the same time taking leave to emphasize pertinent items in the record. Such might well be done by an attorney before a court in his summary arguments. He would say to the judge: "You have all the facts before you, but, with your permission, I shall emphasize those facts which are especially germane and those circumstances which, despite other facts, justify my plea."

There are several variations to the courtroom pattern in prayer. As we have previously stated, some of the prayers do not explicitly state the petition. The courtroom prayer with implied petition is exemplified by this prayer of Rabban Gamliel in distress; the request is implicit in his situation. Gamliel and his students were traveling in a boat when a terrible storm arose; they feared that the boat would capsize. Gamliel understood that he was the cause of the storm; it came as

punishment for his treatment of Eliezer b. Hyrcanus. He then arose and spoke this prayer of self-justification:

a. רבונו של עולם
b. גלוי וידוע לפניך שלא לכבודי עשיתי
ולא לכבוד בית אבי אלא לכבודך
שלא ירבו מחלוקות בישראל

a. Master of the Universe!
b. It is revealed and known to You that I did not act for my own honor nor for the honor of my father's house, but rather for Your honor, that disagreements not multiply in Israel.

According to the Talmud, the storm then ceased; the petition of Rabban Gamliel had been granted.[10]

The request is implied in the situation which evoked the prayer of Rabbi Tanhuma. Tanhuma had proclaimed a fast at the behest of his disciples, but no rain had come. He then advised them that, as soon as their hearts would be filled with compassion one for the other, then the Holy One Blessed Be He would be filled with compassion for them. Subsequently they observed a man who had divorced his wife giving money to his former wife. Asked why he had done so, the man responded: "I saw her in great distress and was filled with compassion for her." Thereupon Rabbi Tanhuma offered his prayer:

a. רבונו של עולם
b. את אומר לפי שיהיו לפניך מצונעות כאיך
אוהבך כשהיה ואת מצטערים כמים לאותן
שכועסים בך חנון וכחום לאנו קנו יהודים
קני אברהם יצחק ויעקב שלא כמה
וכמה שעמדו לפניך כמים

a. Master of the Universe!
b. This man, upon whom this woman had no claim for sustenance, yet saw her in her distress and was filled with pity for her. As for You, seeing that of You is is written, "gracious and compassionate," and since we are the children of Your loved ones, the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, how much the more so should You be filled with compassion upon us.[11]

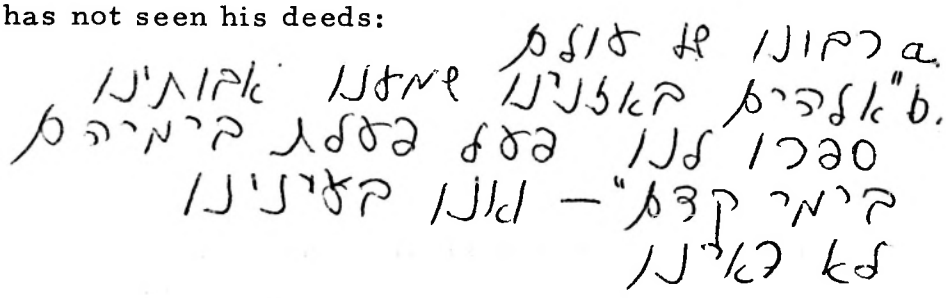
The indirect request here is clearly for rain. But in this prayer we have a new element in "b." Here the case for God's compassion is made by showing a human example and demanding of God that He whose attributes are compassion and graciousness is obligated by his very nature to act favorably upon this request for mercy. We note, too, that Torah, the word of God, is quoted to God -- as if to say -- this is Your law, and now You are obligated to follow it. Reference is also made to the status of the petitioners; they are the children of the Patriarchs -- the merit of the fathers is thus another justification invoked in the plea.

Continuing our consideration of the various kinds of elements which make up the plea in the courtroom type rabbinic prayer, we turn to the prayer of the priests. This prayer was recited after they had blessed the people with the Priestly Blessing. It also quotes Scripture to God, reminding him of his promise and asking that he fulfill it (c).

א. כיון שזה עשק
ב. עשינו מה שלבך עלינו
ג. עשה עמנו מה שהבטחת לנו —
"הבט משחון קדשך מן השמים וכו'"

a. Master of the Universe!
b. We have done what You have decreed for us.
c. Do for us that which You have promised: "Look down from Your holy habitation, from the heaven, and bless Your people Israel..... (Deut. 26:15)"[12]

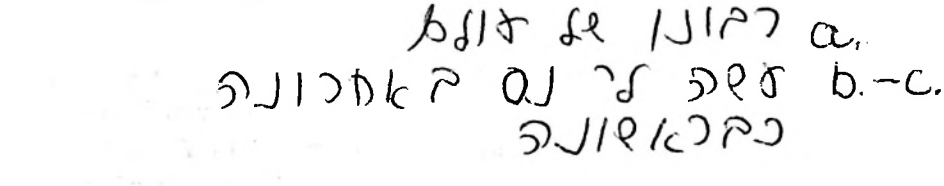
A Biblical quotation is employed as part of the argument (b) in the prayer for rain of Rabbah and Shabbur Malka which they offer after previous prayers for rain had gone unanswered. They remind God that he has done great deeds for past generations, but that the present generation has not seen his deeds:



a. Master of the Universe!
b. "O God, we have heard with our ears; our fathers have told us what deeds You did perform in their days, in the days of old (Psalm 44:2), but, as for us, with our own eyes we have not seen."

Here again the petition for rain is implicit in the situation.[13]

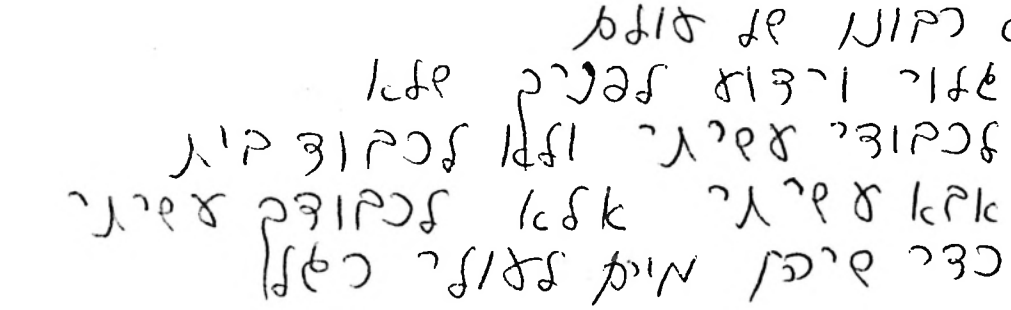
Reliance on the precedent of former miracles underlies the plea in a prayer of Nakdimon b. Gurion:



a. Master of the Universe!
b.-c. Make for me a miracle now as You have before.[14]

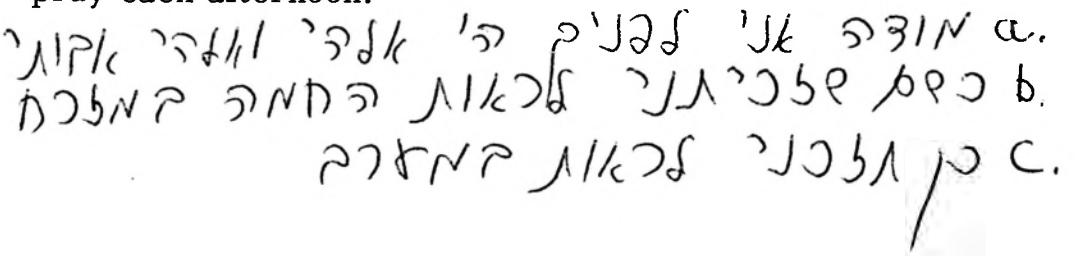
The miracle Nakidimon referred to in the above prayer was the rain which fell in answer to a previous prayer in which he requested rain. The petition in that prayer is implied in the situation which evoked it. The merit

which Nakdimon pleads in behalf of his request is that the petition is not for his glory nor for the glory of his family, but for the convenience of the festival pilgrams who needed water.



a. Master of the Universe!
b. It is revealed and known to You that I acted not for my glory nor for the glory of my father's house, but, rather for Your glory. I acted in order that there should be water for the festival pilgrams.[15]

The precedent of the past graciousness of God need not be of a distant moment or act in the past. Thus would Samuel b. Nachman pray each afternoon:



a. I give thanks before You, O Lord my God and God of my fathers.
b. Just as You have caused me to merit to see the sun in the east
c. so cause me to merit to see it in the west.[16]

The address form in Nachman's prayer, "מודה אני לפניך, I give thanks before You," is a standard introduction for prayers of thanksgiving and confession prayers with which we shall later deal in

detail. The past deed referred to in the plea (b) of Nachman is, of course, God's granting him the sight of the morning sunrise, ie. the gift of life. So, too, he prays (c) for continued life and grace that he may see the sunset.

Another variation of the courtroom pattern in prayer employs a rhetorical question in the plea. The request is implied in the rhetorical question. Thus the prayer of Rabbi Tsadok upon entering the ruins on the Temple mount:

א. רבש"ע
ב. מלכי מלכים עירך וחרבת
ג. אתה תשב ושקט ושלו?

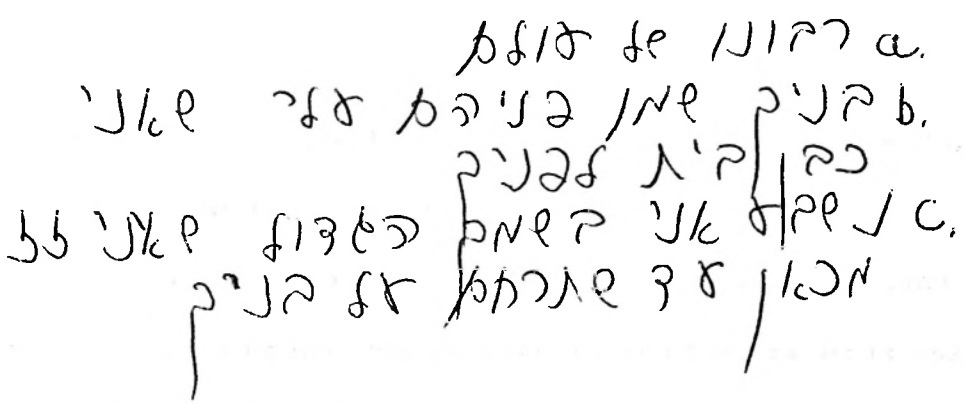
a. Master of the Universe, my Father in heaven!
b-c. You have destroyed Your city and burned Your Temple. Now shall You sit and be calm and quiet?[17]

We find the same use of rhetorical question by Levi in his prayer for rain:

א. רבונו של עולם
ב. עלית וישבת במרום
ג. ואין מלכים של בשר ודם כמותך עושים רחמים על בניך?

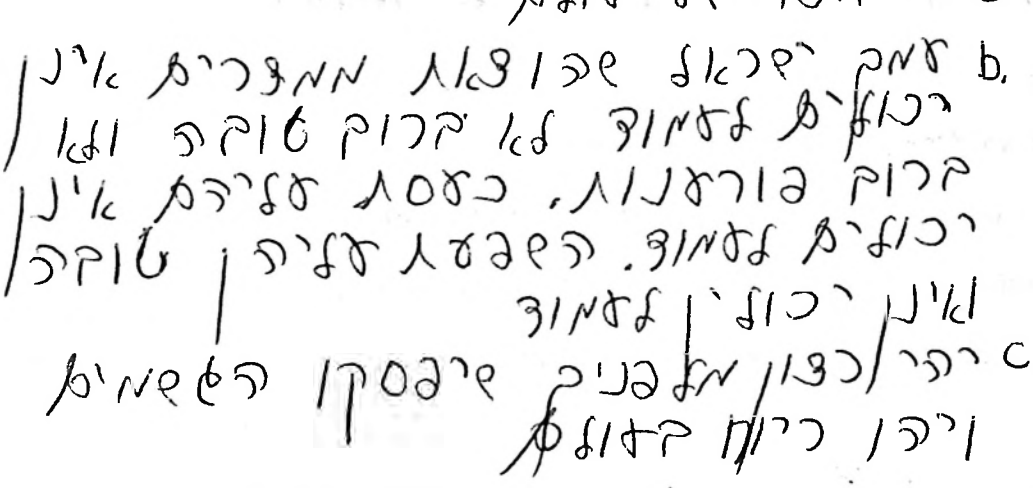
a. Master of the Universe!
b-c. You have gone up and dwelt on high. Shall You not have mercy on Your children?[18]

Well known among Talmudic prayers are the prayers for rain of Ḥoni, the Circle-drawer. Ḥoni, asked by the people to pray for rain, interceded for them with prayers displaying the characteristics of the courtroom prayer pattern. Thus Honi prays:



a. Master of the Universe!
b. Your children have turned to me, for I am like a member of Your household.
c. I swear by Your great name that I am not moving from here until You have mercy upon Your children.[19]

The prayer of Ḥoni was answered, but all did not go well. For the rain came in such abundance and force that a flood threatened the people. Thus Ḥoni again prayed, setting his case before the Supreme Judge:



a. Master of the Universe!
b. Your people Israel, whom You brought forth from Egypt, cannot stand either before Your excessive goodness or Your excessive punishment. If You are angry with them, they cannot withstand it; if You are too abundant with Your goodness, they cannot withstand it.
c. May it be Your will that the rains stop and that there be relief in the world.[20]

It may be noted that there creeps into the prayers of the courtroom

model a note of presumpuousness, even, as in the case of Honi, of insolence. And the excessive rain is clearly a heavenly condemnation of that insolence. But Rabbi Hanina b. Dosa prays what seems to me to be an even more presumptuous prayer, and the prayer is answered. As Hanina b. Dosa was walking along a road -- in what seems to have been a time of drought -- rain began to fall. Then Rabbi Hanina prayed: "רבונו של עולם כל העולם כולו נזון אחינא קפדנא", Master of the Universe! All of the world is comforted but Hanina is troubled." The rain stopped. When he arrived at his house, Hanina again prayed: "רבונו של עולם כל העולם כולו בצער ואחינא נזון", Master of the Universe! All the world is troubled, but Hanina is in comfort." Again the prayer is answered, and the rain commences.[21]

How can we account for this element of presumption which we find in these private prayers of the courtroom model? Nothing resembling this direct and presumptuous approach to God appears in the statutory liturgy. Indeed, in much of the private prayer realm, there is generally a more humble approach to God, especially in the use of the כביכול formula.

In the first place, as we examine the sixteen court pattern texts which we have considered, most of these prayers which are so direct are offered in times of particular concern and distress. Nine of the prayers are petitions concerning rain. One is offered in the midst of a storm at sea; one is uttered at the moment of death, and one is uttered upon witnessing the ruins of the Temple. In each case, except

perhaps for that of Hanina b. Dosa, the situation is one of especial concern and distress. Thus the setting itself seems to call for a more direct approach to God.

Nor is brief and direct petition in time of distress unprecedented. In the Midrash, the rabbis expressed their notion that lengthy prayers in crisis situations were not propitious. At the Red Sea, Rabbi Meir relates, Moses, with the Egyptians in hot pursuit, dallied while Naḥshon took the first plunge into the sea. God, as Meir expounds, then rebuked Moses: "My loved ones are drowning in the sea; why are you standing and dallying with lengthy prayers?"[22] Further precedents for direct appeal are the prayers suggested for recitation, in place of the tefillah, in places of danger. These prayers, too, are brief and to the point. No time is taken with praise or formal address, though the prayers do close with the berakha formula. These prayers are found in the Talmud and in the Tosefta:

עשה רצונך בשמים ממעל ותן נחת רוח
ליראיך מתחת וכל אשר
תראה בעיניך עשה אל תאריך

Do Your will in heaven above and grant a pleasant spirit to those who fear You below. And what is good in Your eyes, do. Blessed are You, O Lord, who hears prayer. (Rabbi Eliezer)

שמע שועת עמך ישראל ועשה מהרה
בקשתם. ברוך אתה ה'
שומע תפלה

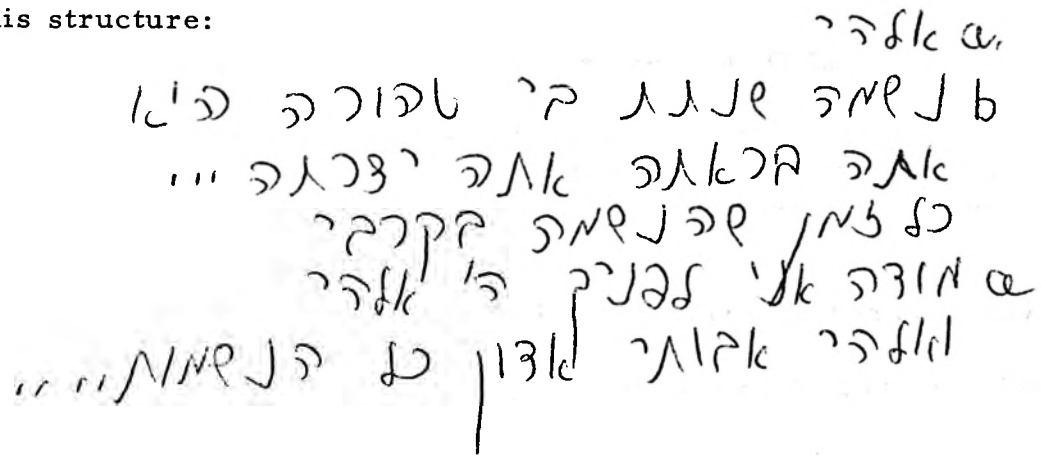
Hear the supplication of your people Israel and speedily do their request. Blessed are You, Lord, who hears prayer. (Rabbi Joshua)[23]

These brief and pointed prayers indicate that the rabbis did permit pointed and direct appeal to God in situations of danger or distress. The situations, they understood, made the usual openings of praise unnatural and impossible. The rabbis, too, had precedent for setting cases before God and demanding that He do justly. For even in the Bible Abraham confronted God with words of complaint as he sought to force God to spare Sodom and Gomorrah.

On further analysis, we find that the element of presumption in the courtroom prayers is actually not very great in most of them. As we have noted, the prayer of Judah Ha Nasi was a death-bed request for a repose of peace. The prayers which we shall observe petitioning God for acceptance of atonement and for aid in doing his will are, by the nature of their requests, humble. One of the petitions begins with a note of thanksgiving. And most of the rain prayers, though direct, are respectful in tone -- even as an attorney is respectful in presenting a motion before a judge. Even the requests of Nakdimon and Gamliel are justified on the basis that their actions were for the glory of God and not their own. Thus it seems to me fair to say that the presumption element is more apparent in the form than real in terms of content, except in the cases of the prayers Hanina and Honi. Regarding the latter, the uniqueness of the personalities involved accounts for their prayers. Honi, though he was interceding for the people, was not well thought of by many rabbis; his petition was not answered without difficulties -- notably, a flood.[24] As for Hanina b. Dosa, he was deemed

to be a man of such deep piety that his prayer availed over even that of the High Priest.[25]

The courtroom pattern is not restricted to use in prayers of petition; we find this pattern used for prayers of thanksgiving, as well. In the second section of the prayer, the plea appears as a statement acknowledging God's bounty and expressing thanksfulness to him. Petition may or may not be included. The morning prayer displays this structure:



a. May God,
b. The soul which You have placed within me is pure. You have created it; you have formed it... As long as there is breath within me,
a. I will give thanks before You, O Lord, my God and God of my fathers, Master of all deeds, Lord of all souls....[26]

Prayers of the courtroom type may open with or include a special form of address and acknowledgement: "מודה אני לפניך, I gratefully acknowledge." This formula, used widely in prayers of thanksgiving and prayers of confession, has been found by Heinemann to be a formula actually used in Jewish courts. This and similar phrases were used in courts for affidavits of compulsion. Heinemann

also notes that the מודה אני formula was used in letters from the Bar Kochba period.[27]

Example of the use of מודה אני in a courtroom-patterned prayer of thanksgiving is seen in the prayer of Rabbi Akiba:

א. מודה אני לפניך ה' אלהי
ב. ושמת חלקי מיושבי בית המדרש
ולא שמת חלקי מיושבי קרנות
רחובות

a. I gratefully acknowledge before You, O Lord my God
b. that You placed my portion among those who sit in the House of Study and have not placed my portion among those who spend their time at corners in the market.[28]

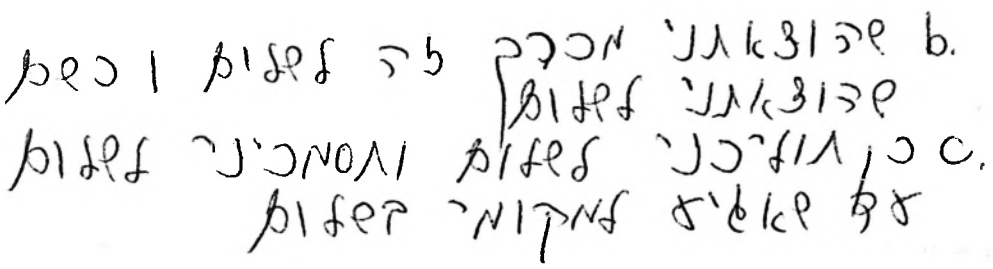
Similarly the prayer which Samuel b. Nachman offered each day after reciting his morning tefillah expresses thanksgiving and employs the courtroom style:

א. מודה אני לפניך ה' אלהי
ב שהוצאתני מאפלה לאורה

a. I gratefully acknowledge before You, O Lord my God,
b. that You brought me forth from darkness to light.[29]

The prayer of thanksgiving of courtroom style may include a petition. Thus, in the prayer which one recites upon leaving a city on a return journey, one says:

א. מודה אני לפניך ה'



a. I gratefully acknowledge before You O Lord my God
b. that You brought me forth from this city in peace.
And just as You brought me forth in peace,
c. so guide me in peace and support me in peace until
I arrive at my place in peace.[30]

In this kind of prayer, gratefulness for God's act of grace is set forth, and the precedent then serves as the basis -- the element of faith in the possibility of future blessing -- for the petition to be asked.

Among the private prayers of the rabbis we find yet another type of prayer which is built on the courtroom pattern. That type of prayer is the confession prayer. Before undertaking analysis of the confession texts, let us note the apparent paradox of the use of courtroom pattern for these prayers. For, if one has sinned before the Omniscient Deity and seeks forgiveness, of what significance -- in respect to prayer before God -- is there in the listing of one's evil deeds prior to petitioning God for mercy and forgiveness?

Heinemann, too, observed this paradox and suggested that the element of the "absurd" in confession before an all-knowing God is explained in the use of the plea pattern itself. For just as a man enters a plea in court before a judge -- even if he is guilty -- so does he enter a plea before the Supreme Judge. The confession, further, explains in plea form just why it is that a man cannot stand before God and rely upon his own merits and achievements. This notion is expressed

clearly in such phrases as " מה נאמר לפניך , What can we say before You. "[31]

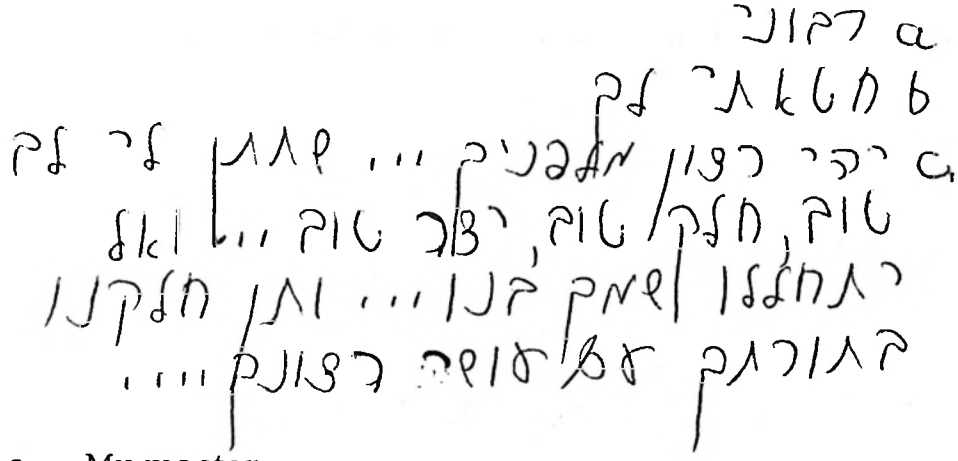
The situation here, Heinemann suggests, is that the one who prays understands that he has no way to justify himself, but he feels that he must say something. But what can he say before God to whom all is revealed and known? All he can do is acknowledge his guilt.[32] In such a confession of guilt, one testifies to his understanding of the magnitude of his sins, and he throws himself upon the mercy of the court.

Turning now to a consideration of the confession prayers in detail, we note first the brief confession prayer of the High Priest on Yom Kippur:

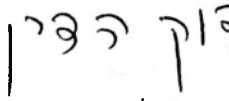
a. I beseech Lord
b. I have sinned, I have transgressed before You,
a. I beseech, O Lord,
c. Forgive, please, these iniquities and sins which I have done iniquitously, transgressed, and sinned before You.[33]

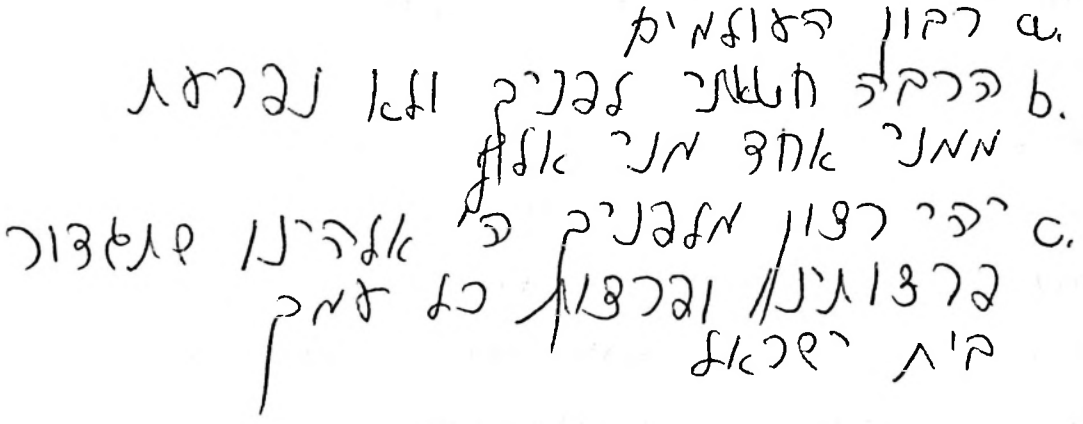
The language of this confession is influenced by Biblical style as seen in, for example, the verse in the Hallel Psalm: אנא ה' הושיעה נא We beseech You, O Lord, cause us now to prosper (Psalm 118:25). "

The daily confession of R. Janai consists of a brief confession and a lengthy petition and is in the courtroom style:



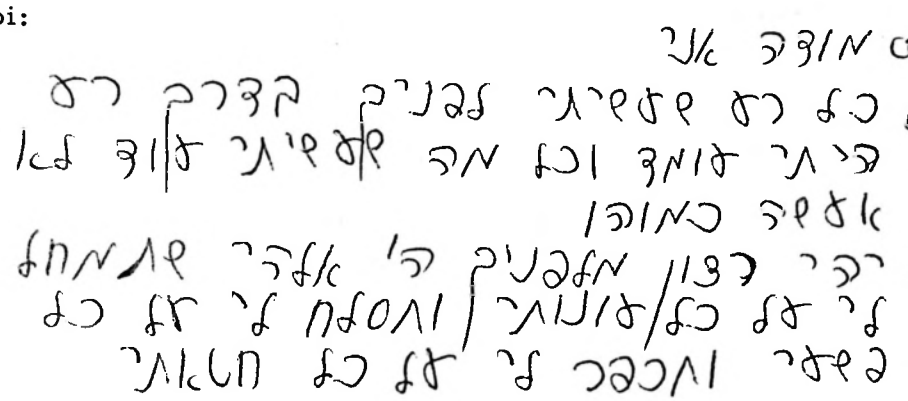
a. My master,
b. I have sinned before You
c. May it be Your will....to give me a good heart, a good portion, a good inclination...and may Your name not be profaned through us...and grant our portion in Your Torah....[34]

The mourner's prayer,  , justification of the verdict, is both a confession and an acceptance of God's judgment:



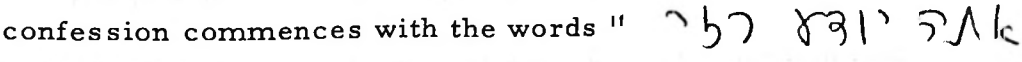
a. Lord of all Worlds,
b. Much have I sinned before You, and You did not punish me one thousandth part.
c. May it be Your will O Lord our God to close up our breeches and the breeches of all Your people, the House of Israel.[35]

Some of the confession prayers of courtroom model include an additional element in "b": a promise to a change of ways, a promise to sin no further. We find this additional element in the confession of R. Bibi:

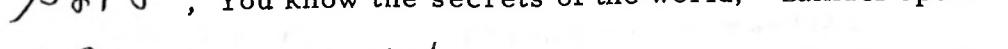


a. I acknowledge
b. all evil that I have done before You. In an evil path I have been standing, and all that I have done, like it I shall not do again.
c. May it be Your will, O Lord, my God, to forgive me all my iniquities, and to pardon all my transgressions, and to absolve me of all my sins.[36]

The Talmud (B. Yoma 87b) reports a discussion concerning the prayer of confession which the individual should recite during the neilah, the concluding service for the Day of Atonement. It is held that the confession should be recited after the tefillah, then there follow several quotations indicating the views of various rabbis as to what that confession should be. Only one confession text is quoted in full, that being the confession of R. Hamnuna (which is the daily tahanun of Rabba). The other confessions are given only by citation of brief quotations: Rav's confession commences with the words "



, You know the secrets of the world;" Samuel opens "



, From the depths of the heart."

Levi's confession includes the phrase " וּבְתוֹרָתְךָ כָּתוּב , And in your Torah it is written" (to which Rashi adds: " כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם , For this day shall stone for You (Lev. 16:30)." The beginning of R. Jadah's confession is quoted " כִּי עֲוֹנֹתֵינוּ רַבּוּ מִסְפָּר וְחַטֹּאתֵינוּ עֲצוּמוֹ מִסְפָּר , For our iniquities are too many to count and our sins, too numerous to be counted." The confession of R. Jochanan opens with the words, " רִבּוֹן כָּל הָעוֹלָמִים , Lord of all Worlds!"[37]

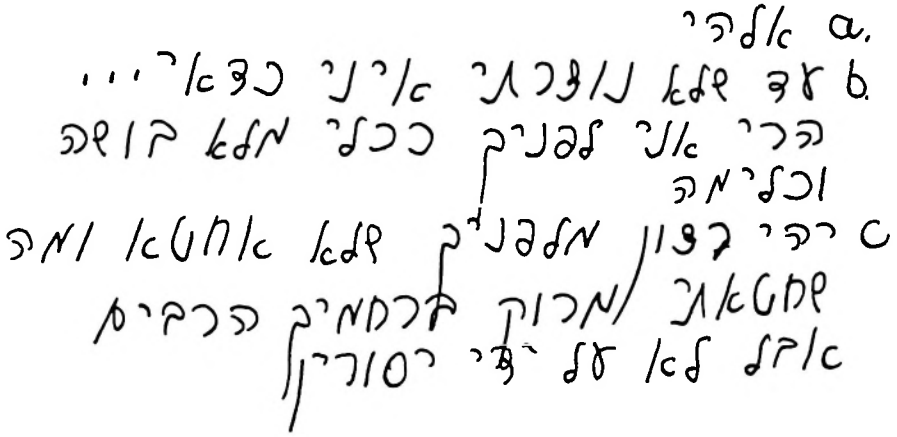
In addition to the fully quoted confession of Hamnuna, the tradition has preserved in full the confession of Rav. That confession appears in the siddur as part of the Yom Kippur confession. We find it included already in the siddurim of Rav Amram and Saadya Gaon:

a. אַתָּה
b. יוֹדֵעַ רָזֵי עוֹלָם וְתַעֲלוּמוֹת סִתְרֵי כָל חֵי אַתָּה חוֹפֵשׂ כָּל חַדְרֵי בָטֶן וּבוֹחֵן כְּלָיוֹת וָלֵב אֵין דָּבָר נֶעְלָם מִמֶּךָּ וְאֵין נִסָּתָר מִנֶּגֶד עֵינֶיךָ
c. וְלָכֵן יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וֵאלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתִּסְלַח לָנוּ עַל כָּל חַטֹּאתֵינוּ וְתִמְחַל לָנוּ עַל כָּל פְּשָׁעֵינוּ וְתִמְכֹּר לָנוּ עַל כָּל עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ

a. You
b. know the secrets of the world and (You know) hidden things, the secrets of everything that lives. You search out the inward parts and investigate within and the heart. Nothing is hidden from You, and there is no secret before Your eyes.
c. Therefore, may it be Your will, O Lord, our God and God of our fathers, to forgive us for all our sins, and pardon us for all our iniquities, and forgive us for all our transgressions.[38]

This confession of Rav exhibits the characteristics of the courtroom form of confession prayer. First, God is acknowledged, and then the extent of the divine knowledge is set forth. Implied is man's accountability before the all-knowing Supreme Judge. The confession concludes with a petition for pardon and forgiveness.

The same structure is seen in the prayer of Rav Hamnuna:

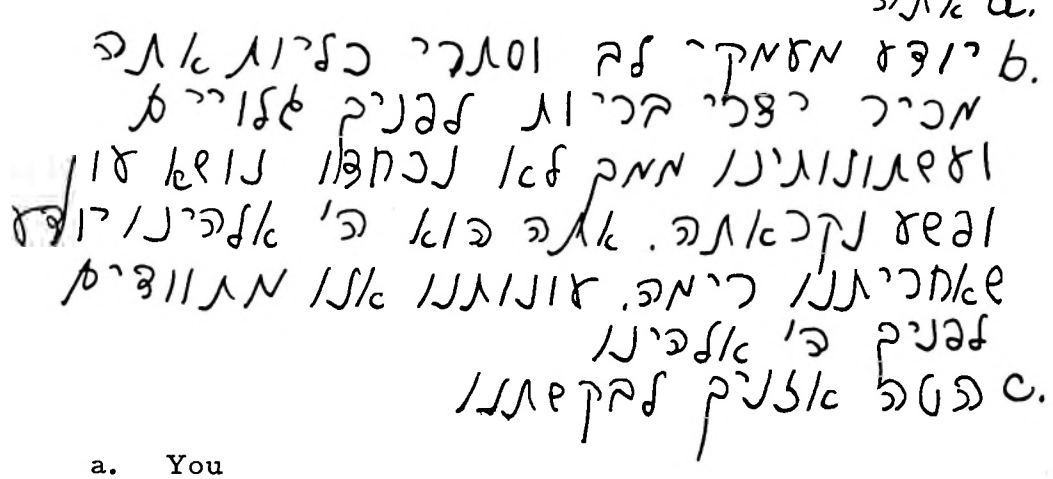


a. My God
b. before I was formed I was not worthy...
behold I am before You as a vessel filled with
shame and disgrace.
c. May it be Your will that I not sin, and that which
I have sinned, wipe out in Your great mercy. But
not by means of suffering.

Hamnuna's plea emphasizes man's humble estate (b), contrasted with Rav's emphasis on God's knowledge of man's secrets. The confession concludes with a prayer for God's help in preventing his falling into sin in the future.

The text of the confession of Samuel, mentioned in the Talmud, had been lost to us until a genizah fragment, discovered by Israel Abrahams, was found to contain a confession text opening with the words, "You know the depths of the heart." These are the words which

the Talmud records as the opening words of Samuel's confession. The original text of Samuel's confession, as reconstructed by Abrahams, displays the same structure as and has similar content to the confession of Rav:



a. You
b. know the depths of the heart and are cognizant of the inner secrets. The inclinations of creatures before You are revealed, and their thoughts are not hidden from You. Forgiver of sin and transgression You are called. You are He, the Lord our God, for You know that our end is the worm. Our sins we confess before You, O Lord our God.
c. Incline Your ear to our supplication.[40]

This similarity of the confession of Samuel to that of Rav is readily apparent. Samuel, as did Rav, stresses God's knowledge of man's deeds, thoughts, and innermost secrets. In the confession of Samuel, the plea section (b) refers specifically to an attribute of God --  -- and calls attention to the act of confession itself. These points serve to justify the petition (c). Samuel is less explicit than in the prayer of Rav, but both clearly are requesting divine pardon and forgiveness. Both confessions are prayers which utilize the courtroom pattern.

Abrahams has raised the question of the reason for Samuel's confession having fallen out of use and having been lost. Only one confession for Neilah, was needed, he suggests, and the confessions of Rav and Samuel were too similar for both to have been incorporated into the liturgy. Unlike the case of the prayer אתה חונן, the abbreviation of the middle blessings of the tefillah, where Samuel's form survived Rav's, the confession of Rav became ascendant, and Samuel's, preserved only in a few congregations, fell into disuse. Samuel's confession must have been well known in Talmudic times, however, for the passage is quoted only by its opening lines and is not given in full. By contrast, the confession of Hamnuna must not have been so well known. Thus it was necessary to quote it fully, preserving it for later incorporation into the liturgy.[41]

A third confession mentioned in the Yoma passage may also be preserved in the siddur. According to the Talmud, the confession of Rabbi Jochanan began with the words "רבון כל העולמים, Lord of all Worlds." Rashi adds the comment that his prayer continued "כי לא על צדקתינו, for not on account of our righteousness." Tradition ascribes a prayer which opens with these words and which has become a part of the morning blessings to Rabbi Jochanan. The structure of this prayer is that of the courtroom pattern, and is similar to the other confession texts. The themes of man's humility and supplication expressed therein are also consistent with the themes of the other confession prayers. This prayer appears in the Siddur of Rav Amram and in the Mahzor Vitri, though without the word "כי,

all" in the address in the latter:

a. רבון כל העולמים

b. לא על צדקותינו אנחנו מפילים תחנוניהם לפניך כי על רחמיך הרבים מה אנחנו מה חיינו מה חסדנו מה צדקותינו מה ישועתנו מה כוחנו מה גבורתנו מה נאמר לפניך כי הלא כל הגבורים כאין לפניך והאנשי השם כלא היו וחכמים כבלי מדע ונבונים כבלי השכל כי רוב מעשיהם תהו וימי חייהם הבל לפניך ומותר האדם מן הבהמה אין כי הכל הבל

d. אבל אנחנו עמך בני בריתך ... לפיכך חייבים אנחנו להודות לשבחך ... אשרינו מה טוב חלקנו ... שאנחנו משכימים והערבים ערב ובקר (פעמים) בכל יום: שמע ישראל יי אלהינו יי אחד

a. Lord of all Worlds!

b. Not on account of our righteousness do we cast our supplication before You; rather because of Your great mercies. What are we, what our life, what our deeds, what our righteousness, what our power, what our strength, what our might? What shall we say before You, O Lord our God and God of our fathers? Are not all the might men as naught before You, and important men as though they had never been? and the wise as without knowledge; and the discerning as without insight? For their deeds are void and their life is vanity before You. And man is not better than the beast. For all is vanity?

d. But we are Your people, the children of Your covenant... Therefore we are obliged to praise You and to glorify You.... Happy are we, how good is our lot... that we arise and retire evening and morning and say twice each day: Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.[42]

The opening of R. Jochanan's confession exhibits both the form and content styles of the other prayers of confession. God is acknowledged (a), and man's awareness of his own humble state is expressed (b). The text that is preserved in the Sephardi version buttresses the courtroom form with its content. For in the Sephardi version the language of the courtroom is specifically used:

כי הכל הבל. לבד הנשמה הטהורה
שבקרבנו עתידה ליתן דין וחשבון
לפני כסא כבודך

For all is vanity, except only the pure soul which hereafter must give accounting before Your glorious throne.[43]

It is the conclusion of this prayer -- which I have noted as "d" -- which troubles. Rather than a petition for forgiveness of sin, as we would have expected from our other models, this prayer continues on a note of exaltation, emphasizing the status of Israel as "children of the covenant" with the merit and obligation to praise God daily. This conclusion (d) is surely unique among the confession prayers. This fact leads me to speculate that the conclusion is perhaps a later addition to the original confession, and that the original confession concluded either at the end of "b", with a petition for forgiveness implied, or had an explicit petition for God's pardon of man's sinfulness. Heinemann disagrees, however. He holds that the prayers of thanksgiving and the prayer of confession -- both of which employ the courtroom pattern -- are essentially the same kind of prayer. In one case, there is confession of sin; in the other, there is confession of an obligation to

thank and praise, a confession of dependence upon God.[44] The prayer ascribed to R. Yochanan, then, in Heinemann's terms, could be seen as a hybrid of the confession and thanksgiving type prayers which use the courtroom pattern.

The final confession text which we shall consider is found in the Pesikta Rabbati; Marmorstein holds it to be the youngest of the confession prayers and notes its affinity to a prescription for confession given in the name of Mar Zutra, one of the youngest teachers of the Amoraic period. Marmorstein quotes the statement of Mar Zutra who holds that a short confession " אבל חטאנו אבל, but we have sinned, " to be adequate for confession. (This phrase, he suggests, likely followed some praise or contrast with particularly virtuous or righteous people.)[45] In the Midrash the confession comes in the context of Israel's suffering. Despite that suffering, Israel proclaims God's righteousness and confesses its own sins:

b.[1] אבל חטאנו אבל עוינו אבל בגדנו בשלנו
מרדנו אכזנו לסרנו אמרנו
ולפל שוב לנו.

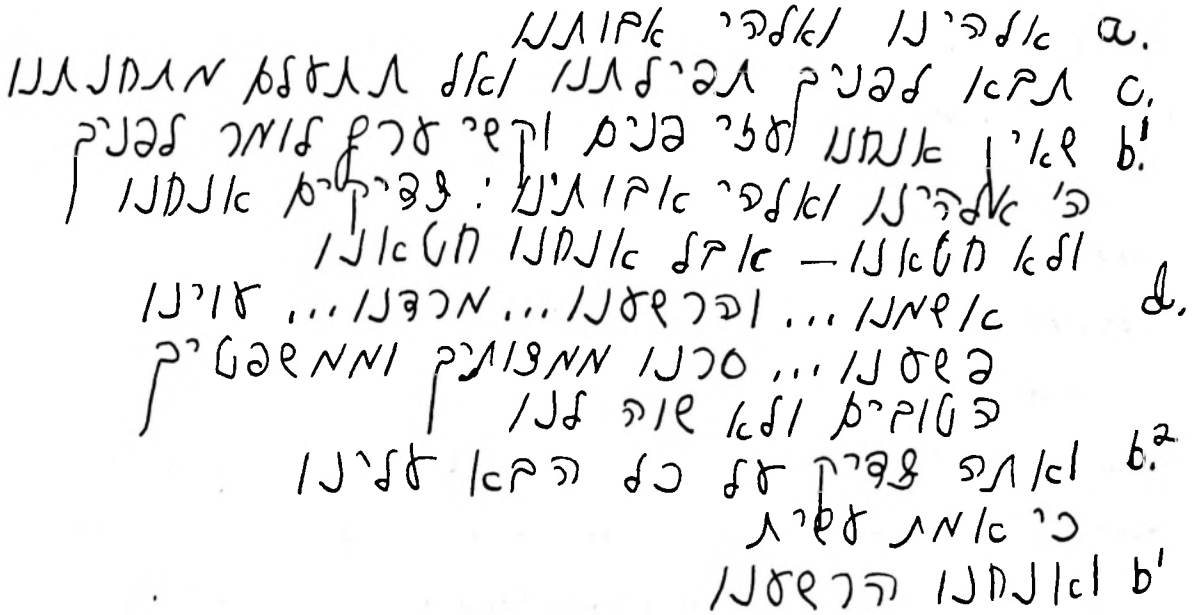
b.[2] ואתה צדיק על כל הבא
כי אמת עשית ואנחנו הרשענו

b.[1] But we have sinned, we have done iniquity, we have done wickedly, we have transgressed, we have rebelled, we have been bitter, we have turned from Your commandments and Your norms and it has not availed us.

b.[2] And as for You, You are just in all that has come upon us. Truth You have done, but we have done wickedly.[46]

The plea consists of two elements: the confession of man's sinfulness, and the contrasting element of God's justice and righteousness in all that has come to pass. The petition for forgiveness is implied.

This confession undoubtedly influenced the development of the siddur with regard to the confession prayer which became crystallized and required for the Yom Kippur tefillah. For the prayer which became part of the Yom Kippur confession displays evident similarity with this confession from Pesikta Rabbati:

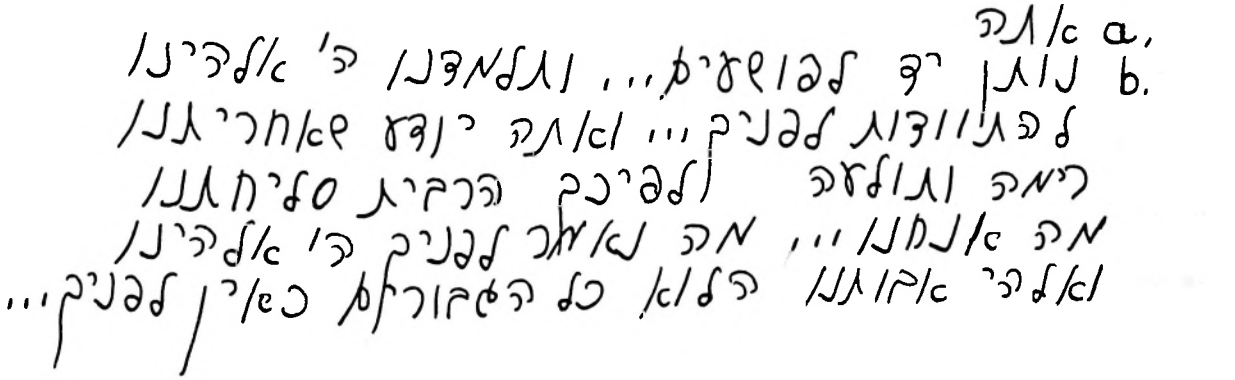


a. Our God and God of our fathers!
c. May our prayer come before You, and do not hide Yourself from our supplication.
b.[1] For we are not so presumptuous and stiffnecked as to say before You, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, that we are righteous and have not sinned. But we have sinned:
d. we are guilty...we have done evil...we have rebelled...we have done iniquity, we have transgressed...
we have turned from Your commandments and your norms, and it has not availed us.

b.[2] And as for You, You are just in all that has come upon us. Truth You have done, but we have done wickedly.[47]

The similarities are clear. Much of the wording of the Peskta Rabbati appears in the confession in the Siddur; the structures are the same, the two element plea appears. The siddur version includes address and petition (a and c) which are implied in the Pesikta Rabbati text. The content, of course, is the same. The middle section of the plea in the Siddur, indented above, is an alphabetic acrostic, which includes some of the words of the Pesikta version. The acrostic formula for the confession is a later composition[48] than the rest of the prayer which follows so closely the Peskita text.

The courtroom pattern of private prayer exerted a significant influence upon the development of Jewish liturgy in its later crystallization. And it is the area of confession prayer which, perhaps, most clearly illustrates this. Heinemann has observed the influence of these confession prayer upon other confession type prayers which made their way into the siddur and has indicated several examples. One example for us will suffice. We note a piyyut which is a confession of the courtroom style which has become part of the fixed liturgy:



ואתה סולח לרוב הכובשים בעדה ...
שאתה נתפלל שאומרים ... ואנחנו אומרים ...
כי אתה יודע יצרנו ...
רחם עלינו ...

a. You
b. who extends a hand to sinners... and has taught us, O Lord God, to confess before You... and You know that our end is the worm, therefore You have made abundant our pardon. What are we?... What shall we say before You, O Lord our God and God of our fathers? Are not the mighty men as naught before You?... And You have given us this Day of Atonement... in order that we may cease from the exploitation of our hands and return to You....
c. And as for You, in Your great mercy have compassion upon us....[49]

The rabbis, themselves trained and active in the courts of Jewish law, adopted quite readily the forms of the courtroom to their prayer expression. A significant proportion of the private rabbinic prayer which has been preserved in Talmud and Midrash employs the courtroom form. The form, itself, is flexible. It is particularly well suited for the personal plea; by its form it lends itself to the setting forth of situational demands, personal merit, and religious beliefs which motivate the petition of the individual. The courtroom form of prayer is used by many rabbis to justify themselves and their petitions in situations of extreme personal distress and concern. The courtroom form, too, was used for prayers of thanksgiving and for prayers of confession. Many prayers of the courtroom pattern, such as the prayer of Mar. b. Rabina, the morning prayer יהי רצון מלפניך , and several

of the confession prayers, gradually became incorporated into the siddur. Indeed, several of the confessions have become part of the Yom Kippur service in the tefillah itself. Thus we see that the court-room pattern, so familiar to the rabbis, became an integral form for their private prayer expression and, ultimately, a significant influence on the development of Jewish public worship.

CHAPTER V

PRAYERS OF BET HA MIDRASH ORIGIN

Within the pages of the Talmud and Midrash we find frequently recurring yet another type of prayer expression. A derasha in Numbers Rabbah opens:

יתברך שמו של מי"ה הקב"ה שקרא על
עולמו קדמאי ובתבונה [1] יסד שמים ועל
חקר ולשבועתו אין מספר
בכל"ב: כולם כנשק מי הים
נותן קהלות ישמות

Blessed be the Name of the supreme King of Kings, the Holy One Blessed Be He, who created His world in wisdom and understanding; His wonders are beyond searching out and His greatness has no measure. As it is written: "He gathered the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deeps in a storehouse. (Psalm 33:7).[1]

Opening a section of the Midrash Deuteronomy Rabbah we find this prayer:

יתברך שמו של הקב"ה יודע מה
הוה ועתיד לבוא: משך מכול שיל
אחרית [2]

May the Name of the Holy One Blessed Be He be blessed, who knows what has been, and what will be in the future, 'Declaring the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10).[2]

The Tanhuma on the portion ekev begins:

יתברך שמו של הקב"ה שנתן לישראל תורה
ק"ש מצות רמ"ח אזהרות
קלות וחמורות

May the Name of the Holy One Blessed be He be blessed, who gave Torah to Israel which has in it 613 commandments, minor and major...[3]

And in the context of a derasha on the giving of the Torah, R. Hisda, through his meturgammon prayed:

ברוך רחמנא דיהב תורתיה לעמיה ישראל

> Blessed be the All Merciful who gave a three fold Torah to a three fold people through a third born on the third day of the third month.[4]

Finally, a section from Seder Eliahu Rabbah, a late Midrash collection, opens with these words of praise:

ברוך המקום ברוך הוא שבחר בכל
ישראל מכל כל העולם ומכל מעשה ידיו שברא
בעולם וקנה אותם קנין עולם

> Blessed is the Omnipresent, blessed be He, who chose Israel from all the creatures of the earth and from all the works of His hand, which He created in the world, and acquired them as an enternal possession....[5]

Each of these prayers display common elements of content, context, and style; all are given in the House of Study, the Bet Ha Midrash. Such prayers -- and these are but a few examples -- originating from the Bet Ha Midrash display certain clearly identifiable characteristics of form and style which have been thoroughly analyzed by Dr. Joseph Heinemann, who was the first to set forth the Bet Ha Midrash prayer as a distinct prayer category. Here we undertake merely to summarize the findings of Dr. Heinemann, whose work on prayers of this category is extensive and well documented.

Prayer which come from the Bet Ha Midrash are spontaneous prayers which arise out of the context of the study and exposition of Torah. In the Study Houses, it was a natural phenomenon for students and scholars to open and close their Scriptural studies which words of praise to God. The prayers we have cited above all are from this context; each prayer opens a public derasha. Other prayers, of similar form and style, were offered at the close of a derasha. Such a

closing prayer text is this prayer of Judah b. Tayma:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו ואלקי
עירך תבנה במהרה בימינו ותן חלקנו
בתורתך

May it be Your will, O Lord our God, that Your city be rebuilt speedily in our days, and grant our portion in Your Torah.[6]

A similar prayer ends a derasha in Derekh Eretz Rabbah:

יהי רצון מלפני הקב"ה שיבנה
בישמחת לב ירושלים ותנחמו אמן

May it be the will of the Holy One Blessed be He that He show us the rejoicing of Jerusalem and its consolation. Amen.[7]

In general, the opening prayers express praise and thanks to God who chose Israel and, who, in his love, bestowed upon them the Torah. God's wisdom, wonders, and creative powers are also oft mentioned. The closing prayers follow organically from the exposition, including motifs of נחמה, consolation, redemption, national redemption. Such themes were usually contained in the last part of the derasha, usually in a Biblical quote, and the prayer took up upon the theme. In addition, the petition that God enlighten the eyes of the assembled in Torah is a theme frequently appended in the closing prayer. These several motifs appear in prayers of Bet Ha Midrash origin either singly or in combination. Now, as we have mentioned, originally these prayers of Bet Ha Midrash origin, were spontaneous. They were not meant to be repeated. Yet, flowing from the logical sequence and structure of the public exposition, these prayers, in time, became stylized. Certain forms of language became accepted and thus were

often used. The themes of the prayers in this category were rather narrowly restricted -- by the nature of the use and context of the prayers -- and the Bet Ha Midrash prayers became prayers mainly of praise of God who gave Torah and petitions for consolation and redemption for Israel.

Dr. Heinemann has indicated the characteristics of the prayers originating in the Bet Ha Midrash. In these prayers, God is referred to by the standard rabbinic appellations such as מקום, the Omnipresent, מלך מלכי המלכים, the Supreme King of Kings, or הקדוש ברוך הוא, the Holy One, Blessed be He. Use of כי and אלהינו are almost non-existent in this category of prayers. After the mention of God, in these prayers, there follows frequently a brief praise formula. The following examples are typical: "ברוך המקום ברוך הוא, Blessed is the Omnipresent, blessed be He," "הקדוש ברוך הוא יתברך שמו, the Holy One blessed be He, may his Name be blessed," and "הקדוש ברוך הוא יתברך שמו שלעלא ולעלמי עלמיא, the Holy One blessed be He, may His great name be blessed forever and ever." The mention of God and praise formula may then be followed by enumeration of his qualities in a form which is rather stereotyped:[8]

ברוך הוא שאין לפניו עוולה ולא שכחה
ולא משוא פנים ולא מקח שוחד

Blessed be He in whom there is no iniquity, nor forgetting nor stubborness.[9]

ברוך אומר ועושה פועל ומקיים

Blessed is He who says and does, decrees and establishes.[10]

In some cases the prayer begins with ברוך המקום, as

we saw in the example from Eliahu Rabbah and as we find in the Passover Haggadah, in the prayer which introduces the Baraita of the Four Sons:

ברוך המקום ברוך הוא ברוך שנתן
תורה לעמו ישראל ברוך הוא

> Blessed be the Omnipresent, blessed is He, who gave Torah to His people Israel. Blessed is He.[11]

A similar formula may appear at the conclusion of a derasha:

ברוך המקום ברוך הוא שלא נמצא
בפיו של טליתו שום אפסון וברוך הוא
שחזר וקיים ועשאן לאהרן
ולבניו כהני ברוך הדיר הקדושים

> Blessed be the Omnipresent, blessed be He, that no blemish has been found in the seed of Aaron. And blessed be He that chose Aaron and His sons to stand and serve before the Lord in the House of the Holy of Holies.[12]

Often at the conclusion of a derasha there appear more direct petitions for consolation, redemption, national restoration, or enlightenment in Torah. Or, alternatively, there may be appended, as in the prayer of Judah b. Tayma, the words "כן יהי רצון, thus may it be (His) will" to a Biblical verse which expresses one of these themes:

שנאמר: ועלו מושיעים בהר ציון - והיתה
לה' המלוכה - וכן יהי
רצון. אמן.

> As it is written:'and saviors shall go up on Mount Zion' -- at that time "the reign shall be the Lord's (Obadiah 1:21), and thus may it be His will. Amen.[13]

The prayers of the Bet Ha Midrash pattern are usually brief and compact. They did not stand alone, but arose incidentally to the derasha. Given their origin, it would seem that they were necessarily brief.

Many of the prayers use Aramaic. They have no fixed, required liturgical formulae, but patterns of language, as we have noted above, recur throughout the prayers of this category. Such stylistic characteristics become signs for identification of prayers which belong to the Bet Ha Midrash category.

One of the most significant characteristics of prayers of the Bet Ha Midrash model is their use of the third person. The third person, especially in reference to God, is not used in the prayer of the fixed liturgy of the synagogue -- where God is addressed as You -- nor is it frequently used in other types of private prayer. In Bet Ha Midrash type prayers, however, the third person is almost exclusively used. And here the third person is particularly appropriate, since the darshan does not address God in his prayer, but, rather, he speaks about him. There is frequent use of participles, especially in descriptions of God's greatness and his attributes.

This category does borrow the " יהי רצון , may it be your will" formula from other categories of private prayer. The formula was, however, so firmly established in the second person that the rabbis found no need or were unable to change it to the third person. Thus יהי רצון is frequently used with the second person in Bet Ha Midrash prayers, as in that of Judah b. Tayma. Occasionally, however, there is a switch of the formula into the third person:

יהי רצון מלפניו ה' אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו
שלא יכשל זרענו ולא נמוט לעולם אמן

> May it be the will of the Holy One Blessed be He that he show us the rejoicing of Jerusalem and its consolation. Amen.[14]

The quotation of a Biblical verse at the end of the derasha, followed by the words " כן יהי רצון, thus may it be (His) will, " indicating a petitionary prayer is a regular feature of this category. So is the use of an invitation to the congregation to respond with the word "amen." In the prayer of the synagogue, there was no need for such an invitation: the congregation knew to respond "amen" following a hatimah to a blessing which began with the words " ברוך אתה ה', Blessed are You, Lord." In the private prayers, there was generally no one around to say "amen," and no response needed. But the Bet Ha Midrash prayers were uttered in public, and, within the context of the exposition, the conclusion point was uncertain to the congreation. In order to evoke the proper response at the proper time, the rabbis concluded the prayer at the end of the derasha with the words " ונאמר אמן, and let us say amen," or " אמן ואמרי אמן, say you amen." In this way, the congregation was informed as to when the prayer would close and when they should respond.[15]

Heinemann has isolated the formal signs of prayer of Bet Ha Midrash origin: (1) the prayers are compact; (2) there are three key motifs: praise-thanks, study and giving of Torah, and petition for consolation, redemption, national restoration -- petitions of Messianic content; (3) there is almost exclusive use of the third person; (4) divine names other than ה' and אלהים are almost exclusively used, and (5)

there are frequently invitations to the congreation to respond with the word, "amen." After isolating these formal characteristics, Heinemann turns to application of form criticism to prayers which have made their way into the siddur to determine which of them is of Bet Ha Midrash origin.

To identify such prayers, Heinemann asserts that one must look in the siddur for a context in which such prayer might logically fit, to wit: prayers which come within the context of the reading of Scriptural verses. Thus Heinemann argues that many of the prayers we now find in our Torah service are prayers which originate in the Bet Ha Midrash. Examples of such prayers are: "ברוך שנתן תורה לעמו ישראל בקדושתו, Blessed is He who has given the Torah unto Israel in His holiness," which is found in the Ashkenazi siddur, the prayer announcing Rosh Hodesh, the blessings following the Haftarah, and the prayer "אב הרחמים הוא ירחם עם עמוסים, Father of Mercies, may He have mercy on a people borne (by Him)." The קדוש דרבנן prayers, the ג' ברכות blessings, and the ברכות prayers of the Bircat Ha Mazon, though probably of later composition, exhibit the formal characteristics of Bet Ha Midrash prayer and must have been modeled upon them. So, too, the prayers for the dead, קדיש יתום and קדיש על מת also exhibit Bet Ha Midrash form.[16]

The Kaddish, too, stripped of later accretions, is a prayer whose origin Heinemann convincingly argues is that of the Bet Ha Midrash. The forms used in the prayer are characteristic of the category. The

praise themes and forms and the use of Aramaic are typical features. Third person is used throughout. There is invitation to congreations response with "amen." And, finally, Heinemann states:

> The Quaddish actually refers to "His Great Name" without mentioning at all to whom reference is made: such practice is, of course, only intelligible when it is realized that this prayer followed immediately upon the actual derashah, in which God was continuously named by one of the appellations mentioned or by the Tetragrammaton in the Scriptural passages quoted. [17]

Applying the method of form criticism to the liturgy, Heinemann has demonstrated that the קדושה prayer, which had been a scholarly puzzle, is a prayer of Bet Ha Midrash type which was then taken over by the author of the three שופרות, the Shofar prayers for the Rosh Ha Shana tefillah. The קדושה prayer, which introduces the "מלכויות," sovereignty verses, differs greatly from the other two prayers. The קדושה displays unmistakeably the characteristics of a Bet Ha Midrash prayer: the "he" style (third person), the use of various appellations for God, including הקב"ה, יוצר מאורי אור, and מלך המלכי המלכים. The Tetragrammaton is not used. A comparative table, which Heinemann prepared and which we reproduce below, indicates that nearly all ideas and themes found in the קדושה are paralleled in other prayers of Bet Ha Midrash model. The context of the קדושה as an introduction to the recitation of Biblical verses buttresses argument that קדושה is from the Bet Ha Midrash category. Thus Heinemann asserts that there is no other conclusion possible but that the author of the מלכויות blessing incorporated the קדושה, an older,

well known prayer into his own composition. Its content is eminently suited to its use as introduction to the sovereignty verses; that it was not changed to the second person form which characterized the other blessings of the Rosh Ha Shana tefillah testifies to the fact that it was already well known and hallowed by the people. Further, such transformation into the second person would have caused deletion of the phrase " מלך מלכי המלכים, the Supreme King of Kings," which probably prompted its inclusion here in the first place. The table below shows clearly the characteristics which Heinemann holds so definitely identify עלינו as a prayer of the Bet Ha Midrash pattern:

עלינו	קדיש	על הכול	ברוך אלוהינו
עלינו לשבח...לתת גדולה	יתגדל ויתקדש	יתגדל וישתבח	ברוך אלוהינו
לאדון הכול...ליוצר בראשית	(בעלמא די ברא)	(בעולמות שברא)	שבראנו לכבודו
שלא עשנו כגויי הארצות וכו'			והבדילנו מן התועים
ואנחנו כורעים וכו'			ולעבדו בלבב שלם
לפני מלך מלכי המלכים (הקב"ה)	שמיה דקודשא בריך הוא	שמו של ממח"מ הקב"ה	
שהוא נוטה שמים וכו'			
ומושב יקרו בשמים ממעל וכו'			
הוא אלוהינו אין עוד אמת מלכנו וכו'	וימליך מלכותיה	תגלה מלכותו עלינו...והוא יבנה ביתו... ויחון פליטתנו	יה"ר...ונזכה... לשני ימות המשיח ולחיי עולם הבא

This table also demonstrates clearly how the prayer " ברוך אלהינו שבראנו לכבודו, Blessed is our God who created us for His glory, " which is part of the Kedusha d'Sidra, fits the form of Bet Ha Midrash prayer. Indeed, the beauty of form criticism is the simplicity of its application. Heinemann notes that the Kedusha d'Sidra prayers are divided into several parts. The ותתן לנו section is originally separate from the ברוך אלהינו prayer and its continuation יהי רצון. Heinemann holds that the latter two sections are prayers of Bet Ha Midrash origin. The first section,

ברוך אלהינו שבראנו לכבודו והבדילנו מן התועים... ונתן בלבנו... לעבדו...

> Blessed is our God who created us for His glory, may He open our hearts in His torah and separate us from the erring... place it in our hearts... to serve Him...[19]

is a typical Torah blessing which introduces Biblical verses. The style is the third person style. The concluding section of the prayer, deviates from the third person style:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו ואלהי
אבותינו שנשמור חוקיך בעולם הזה ונהיה
ונחיה ונראה ונירש טוב וברכה
ושבע ישועה ונחמות לפניך בעולם
הבא

> May it be Your will O Lord, our God and God of our fathers, that we keep Your statues in this world and that we merit and live and see and inherit good and blessing in the days of the Messiah and life in the world to come.[20]

But it is still a concluding prayer of Bet Ha Midrash origin, Heinemann asserts. Despite the deviation, it is an

equally typical prayer of conclusion, combining the two

usual motives: prayer for God's help in observing the Torah, followed by one for the coming of the Messiah.[21]

It is instructive to compare Heinemann's clear and simple analysis of the Kedusha d'Sidra prayers with that of Dr. Leon Liebreich, who misses the essential nature of the prayer. Liebreich does show that יוצר אור is distinct from קדושה דסדרא. He then attempts to show how the קדושה דסדרא is a typical berakhah-type prayer by comparing it to several other prayers and blessings (including some which themselves are clearly Bet Ha Midrash prayers, though Liebreich does not recognize this categorization). Liebreich continues with a phrase-by-phrase explication of the prayer. He fails to observe that the קדושה דסדרא is a different prayer from יוצר אור. Liebreich further asserts that the uniqueness of the קדושה דסדרא prayer is that it is a combination of two Torah blessings: the blessing before the Torah reading, which emphasizes God's choice of Israel to receive Torah, and the blessing after, which stresses the theme of eternal life. He maintains that קדושה דסדרא, which has both themes, is a combination, a planned condensation of these two blessings into one. Liebreich does observe that the קדושה דסדרא prayer lacks the usual requisites for a berakhah, ie. the opening "Blessed are You O Lord our God King of the Universe," which includes the opening formula, "אתה," and "ברוך," and a hatimah. But Liebreich postulates that the unusual opening formula, קדושה דסדרא,

resulted from a compromise of various customs when the composite blessing was written.[22]

Liebreich's extensive analysis misses the key point which the form critical method provides: the ברוך אלהינו prayer is no berakhah at all! We have here merely two prayers of Bet Ha Midrash origin which express typical themes and serve typical function. This, of course, we can see only with the form characteristics of Bet Ha Midrash prayer which Heinemann's study provides us.

The value of the form critical approach is further illustrated by comparison of Liebreich's analysis of the יתגדל invocation to the Yotzer service with an analysis of the same prayer in which we shall apply form criticism. Liebreich quotes the invocation prayer as it appears in the Siddur of Rav Amram:

יתגדל שמו דאלהא בעלמא שפ"א
דקדוש ברוך הוא שבכל אלפין כל ברואין
שנ"ל ברוך מתפאר אפיך דשלטין ורוממות
ואין בונגו אלהים קשמיא מאתפ
ואפ הוא ברוך מתנשא
אפיכ אשתבו חייכ דהוזאת נן
ונקרבנו

May the Name be blessed and the appellation ascend of the Supreme King of Kings, the Holy One Blessed be He, for He is the Lord of all creatures, the ruler over all His works, mighty among those above and those below, and there is none else beside Him, God on heaven above and earth below -- therefore we are obligated to thank Him and bless Him.[23]

Liebreich suggests that this invocation to the Yotzer service was

composed with the נוסח הברכה, the liturgical berakhah formula, as a guide. He lists the following elements of the berakhah formula and their parallels in the invocation prayer:

1. ברוך הוא וברוך שמו // (יתברך, שמך ...)
2. מלכות explicit // (מ"מ ה')
3. מלכות implicit // (ואין, אלהים זולתו ...)
4. אלהות // (אלהיך)
5. ברכה // (לברכו)

1. Blessing and mentioning of the Name is parallel to "May His name be blessed...."
2. Sovereignty explicit is parallel to "King of Kings."
3. Sovereignty implicit is parallel to "And there is none else beside Him."
4. Godhood is parallel to "God."
5. Blessing is parallel to "to bless Him."

And Liebreich also maintains that the prayer both opens and closes with ברוך.[24]

The analysis which Liebreich proposes simply does not stand up before what we have learned about rabbinic prayer in general and the form critical method in particular. In the first place, we have noted throughout how very careful the rabbis were to avoid using forms reserved for the liturgical berakhah in other types of prayers. In the second place, this invocation prayer is clearly not a berakhah in the technical sense, nor does it function as an alternative to a berakhah.

Rather it functions as an alternative to the phrase, " ברוך יי' המקום שנתן נתן לעמו ישראל, Blessed is the Lord who is to be blessed forever and ever." Thus it would be most unlikely that there would be any need or desire for this invocation prayer to fit a berakhah pattern.

Thirdly, the attempt to place the prayer into the סדר ברכה mold is forced. The rabbinic dicta about mentioning שם and מלכות in a berakhah have specific reference: the terms "יי'" and "ומלכותו" specifically meant. The elements outlined by Prof. Liebreich do not fit the specific meaning of these terms. Nor does the phrase, "לברכו, to bless Him" -- in the sense of our being obligated to bless God -- bear the same connotation of the hatimah pattern, "Blessed is the Lord who does such and such." The phrase "שמו יתברך, May his name be praised," is in no way equal to the Tetragrammaton for purposes of a liturgical blessing. And the root "ישתבח" is hardly equal to the root "ברך", technically, in the opening form.

Finally, and most significantly, the invocation prayer is an example par excellence of a prayer of praise whose origin is in the Bet Ha Midrash. In the first place, the style of the prayer is third person. Secondly, the standard rabbinic appellations for God characteristic of Bet Ha Midrash prayer are found here: מלך מלכי המלכים, הקב"ה, and בעל כל הבריות. The language of this prayer is the same as that of other Bet Ha Midrash prayers: we have

seen previously such phrases as " יוצר כל ", and " מי כמוך ", and references to the might of God, to God's creative powers, are typical of the prayers in this category. The closing phrase, " על כן אנחנו חייבים להודות לך ולשבחך " therefore, we are obligated to thank and praise You" is familiar Bet Ha Midrash prayer style; Liebreich himself notes that this phrase is similar to a prayer appearing in the Haggadah. And Heinemann traces the origin of this prayer, which comes in the Haggadah at the conclusion of a derasha, to the Bet Ha Midrash.[25] The invocation to the Yotzer is compact; it includes the theme of praise and thanks which is a characteristic theme of Bet Ha Midrash prayer.

These, then, are the critical signs, uncovered by a form critical approach to the invocation to the Yotzer, which demonstrates that this prayer is neither a berakhah nor modeled on a berakhah pattern. Our analysis shows clearly that this invocation prayer is a prayer typical of those prayers originating in the Bet Ha Midrash which were later incorporated into the liturgy.

Despite our very negative assessment of the analysis of these two prayers by the late Prof. Leon Liebreich, ז"ל, we hasten to emphasize that we intend no denigration of the work of this fine and gifted scholar of Jewish liturgy. Rather we are demonstrating the great breakthrough in liturgical studies which Dr. Heinemann has achieved by his application of form criticism to the liturgy. His isolation of the characteristics of Bet Ha Midrash prayers has given us an invaluable tool

with which to approach the liturgy. The method can help us to solve easily problems which had previosuly stumped the greatest of liturgical scholars. The form critical approach to such prayers as אשרי, אשרי יושבי ביתך and the invocation to the Yotzer provides simple and clear solutions to scholarly problems which had evoked complicated, imaginative, and problematic solutions from earlier scholars. All students of Jewish liturgy are thus greatly indebted to Dr. Heinemann for his creative contribution to liturgical studies.

CHAPTER VI

OCCASIONS PROMPTING PRIVATE PETITIONARY PRAYERS AND THEIR CONTENT

In the private prayer of the rabbis, the tradition has bequeathed to us a rich collection of personal religious expressions. As we have found to be the case with the style and form of these prayers, there is great variety in the content of the prayers. Many different situations, occasions, needs and troubles, joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, prompt the private prayers, and thus a great variety in the prayers results. Yet, as in matters of form, within that variety there emerge certain broad similarities; certain themes, ideas, problems and petitions recur in many different prayers. As we turn now to analyze the content of the private prayers of the rabbis, we shall observe these areas common to many of the prayers and comment upon them. We shall examine first the kinds of occasions which prompt private prayers and then consider the nature of the prayers themselves.

We have already alluded to one occasion at which it was customary for private prayer to be uttered. That occasion is immediately following the recitation of the tefillah of the statutory liturgy. These personal prayers were called prayers of nefilat apayim, literally "falling on one's face," or taḥanun, meaning "supplication." We find in the Talmuds a large number of such prayers which are recorded as having been said by different rabbis " לאחר תפלה , after the tefillah." Berakhot 16b-17a, of the Babylonian Talmud, provides us with the largest collection of such prayers. The prayer recited after his teffilah by R. Alexander is exemplary:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו שתעמידנו
בקרן אורה ולא תעמידנו בקרן חשכה
ולא יכלה לבבנו ועינינו

May it be Your will O Lord Our God, to cause us to stand in a corner of light and not to cause us to stand in a corner of darkness, and may our hearts be not somber nor our eyes darkened. [1]

Also of this type is the prayer of Rav Safra, which he offered after he recited the required blessings of the tefillah:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו שתשים שלום
בין אבא לבנו בין בנו לאבא ובין
תלמידים לתלמידיהם ובין תלמידי
תלמידיהם העוסקים בתורתך בין לשמה
בין שלא לשמה וכל העוסקים
בתורתך לשמה יהא רצון מלפניך
שיהו עוסקים בתורתך לשמה

May it be Your will O Lord our God that You place peace in the family above and in the family below, and among the students who busy themselves with Your Torah, whether they study for its own sake or whether they do not study for its own sake. And, as for all who study not for its own sake, may it be Your will that they occupy themselves with it for its own sake. [2]

Other prayers regularly recited after the tefillah by various rabbis are the prayers of R. Zeira, [3] R. Ḥiyya, [4] R. Alexander, [5] Rabba (the confession of R. Hamnuna), [6] all of which we have examined previously. Still others are quoted in the names of R. Eleazer, [7] R. Jochanan, [8] Rav, [9] Judah Ha Nasi, [10] R. Eliezer, [11] R. Ḥiyya b. Abba, [12] and, finally, the best known of these prayers, the prayer of Mar b. Rabina, whose prayer was incorporated into the siddur for recitation after the tefillah. [13]

Another occasion which prompts private prayer by the rabbis is a private fast or an especially proclaimed public fast. Thus, for example, during a private fast Rav Sheshet prayed that his fast, which diminished his own blood and fat, be as acceptable as if he had offered a sacrifice in the temple.[14]

"Prayers prompted by movement" is a designation which befits several prayers. Such prayers include the tefillat ha-derekh, prayers recited in connection with travel, such as this prayer, which is to be recited when one enters a city:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהי שתכניסני
לשלום לעירך

> May it be Your will, O Lord my God to bring me into this city in peace.[15]

Prayers recited upon entering or leaving a bath house are among the prayers of movement. For example, before one enters a bath house he should say:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהי שתצילני
מאלה ומכיוצא בהן שלא יארע בי פקר
בקרבה ולא שום
בקרבה ולא יארע מיאוס כלפי שיגרם

> May it be Your will O Lord my God to deliver me from this and from things similar, and let no thing of evil or iniquity befall me. And if any perversity befalls me or iniquity, may my death be atonement for all of my iniquities.[16]

Any special movements and entrance or leaving of places which might entail some danger, even the entering and leaving of the Bet Ha Midrash,[17]

might prompt rabbinic private prayers.

Rabbinic private prayer is also occasioned by circumstances of ill health or impending death or by death itself. When bloodletting or cupping takes place, the ill person recites:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהי שיהא
אסק לה לר' ברוקא ורפאני כי
אל רופא נאמן אתה

> May it be Your will O Lord my God that this operation be for me for healing, and may You heal me. For God, a faithful healer, are You, and Your healing is true.[18]

But Abaye, at such a time, merely prays: " ברוך רופא חנם, Blessed be He who heals without payment."[19] Other prayers of this nature are the prayers which the rabbis offered when they visited the sick: " המקום יפקוך בשלום, May the Omnipresent visit you in peace," and " לחנך יזכרך בשלום, May the Merciful One remember you for peace."[20] So, too, the prayer of Judah Ha Nasi's handmaiden during his last illness: " יהי רצון שיכובו מעונים את בעליונים , May it be (God's) will that mortals prevail over immortals."[21]

Death prompts both expressions of consolation in the form of prayer, for example, " ינחם אלכם בעל נחומים, May the Master of Consolations console you," and the expression by the mourner of his acceptance of the justice of God's verdict:

רבון העולמים
הריני מטיח לפניך נפשי ונכל לפרוע ממני אפילו
ובלבד שתהא מיתתי כשרה לפניך שאתה מכפר בה לכל

Lord of all worlds!
I have sinned much before You, but You have not exacted punishment from me, even a thousandth part. May it be Your will O Lord our God to mend our breeches and the breeches of all Your people Israel in mercy.[23]

Another group of rabbinic prayers is that recited by the kohanim and which is prompted by their carrying out aspects of their priestly function. Exemplary is this prayer recited by the priests following their blessing the congregation in words of the Priestly Blessing:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו שתהא
ברכה זו שצוית לברך את עמך
ישראל שלא יהא בה משכול ועון

May it be Your will O Lord our God that this blessing, which You have commanded us to bless Your people Israel, have in it neither stumbling block nor iniquity.[24]

The various activities of daily life and routine prompt numerous and varied expressions of rabbinic prayer. In this category of prayers we have the prayer מודה אני לפניך, which is prescribed for recitation upon awakening in the morning,[25] and the daily confession of R. Jannai which was recited upon awakening:

רבונו של עולם
יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהי שתתן לי בעולם
הזה טוב וכבד טוב סכר טוב שמע טוב ריח
טוב הנאה טוב ונעים שלפני ורוח נאותה
על ידעתך שאין בנו על מעשינו שיהא הפרי
כל פקריעת / על יהי אומרים אנחנו לפניך
ועל תקוותנו לאמת נפש על אבינו ביד
מתנת קיבל ועל ומסך מעונותינו ביד

רבון העולמים לפניך חטאתי ויהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהי ואלהי אבותי שתתן בלבי טוב ומעשה טוב ויראת שמים ואהבת את ה' ותמלא משאלות לבי לטובה

My Master! I have sinned before You. May it be Your will O Lord my God, to give me a good heart, a good portion, a good inclination, a good reason, a good name, a good eye, a good soul, a humble soul and a lowly spirit. May Your Name not be profaned through us; may we not become the topic of gossip in other people's mouths; let our end not be to be cut off nor our future despair. May You let us not need gifts of flesh and blood, nor turn our food into the hands of flesh and blood, whose gifts are few but whose reproach is much, and grant our portion in Your Torah with those who do Your will. Build Your House, Temple, City, and Holy Place speedily and in our days.[26]

Many prayers of this kind are found in the Talmud, and one sizeable collection of them is found in b. Berakhot 60b. Most of these prayers have found their way into the siddur in the form of the birkhot hashahar, the morning blessings.

Then, as today, moments of distress evoked words of prayer and supplication. When confronted with situations of trouble or distress, the rabbis addressed God with words of personal prayer. When his ship was in danger of capsizing in a storm, Rabban Gamaliel prayed: "אלהינו רחם עלינו, Our God, have mercy upon us!"[27] During the siege of Betar, R. Eleazar of Modim, until the fall, prayed each day: "רבון העולם אל תשב היום על כסא הדין, Master of the Universe! Sit not in judgment today." The Talmud, as we have noted previously, records many prayers for rain which the rabbis uttered in times of draught.[29] R. Jonah composed a prayer to be

recited after a distressing dream:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהי ואלהי אבותי שיהיו
כל חלומות שחלמתי עלי ועל אחרים עלי רעים
הם - רעים הם ואם הם טובים הם הרי הם כחלומו
של יוסף ואם אתה מבטלם ממני כשם שהפכת
מי מרה ליין ירחו ע"י אלישע ונקללתו של בלעם
בן בעור לברכה כן תהפוך כל חלומות רעים
שחלמתי עלי לטובה ויהיו כולם לי ולכל ישראל
לטובה לרפואה ולישועה ולשלום

May it be Your will O Lord my God and God of my fathers that the dream I dreamed -- whether this night or other nights, whether I dreamed it or others dreamed about me -- if they are good -- may they be established for me for joy and gladness, and blessing and life. But if it is the opposite -- just as You turned the waters of Marah to sweet, and the waters of Jericho through Elisha to sweet, and the curse of (Baalam) ben B'or to blessing -- so turn all bad dreams. And what others dreamed about me -- for good, for blessing, for healing, for life, for joy, and for peace (may they be).[30]

Many of the prayers prompted by distress situations are uttered by the rabbis out of a particularly personal distress. Such a prayer is offered by Rav Kahana, after his demotion seven rows in the Academy for his failure to point out a contradiction. He attributed this failure to a curse-prediction of Rav, who told Kahana that, for seven years, he would be unable to point out a contradiction to his teacher. In deep embarassment at his demotion, Rav Kahana prayed:

יהי רצון שיהו שבע שורות הללו
תחלוף שבע שנים

May it be (God's) will that these seven rows be in place of the seven years of Rav's (prediction).[31]

Similar examples are numerous.[32]

Finally, private prayer is evoked by the observance of the solemn fast of the Day of Atonement. As we have already seen, the rabbis wrote a number of prayers of confession which expressed their humility and awareness of sin and which laid before God their plea for His forgiveness.

In our study of rabbinic private prayer, we have collected and examined over one hundred prayer texts. One of our objectives was to determine the general nature of the private prayer of the rabbis, to attempt to characterize private prayer as a whole. Freehof attempted a similar characterization. He took a limited group of prayers, the קדיש שלם prayers which the rabbis prayed following their recitation of the tefillah. Freehof concludes from his study that the private prayer of the rabbis was homogeneous and that it did not differ significantly in content from the blessings of the tefillah.[33] In limiting his survey to so small a collection of prayers, Freehof has fallen into several errors. In the first place, he finds private prayer to have a narrower range of thought and expression than, as we shall see, it actually has. Freehof errs, especially, in his contention that the private prayers of the rabbis "are almost exclusively ethical and spiritual.[34] In the second place, Freehof errs in his conclusion that there is very little actual difference between the content of the private prayers and the content of the tefillah. His error seems to be the result of his attempt to fit his restricted sample of prayers into the mold of the tefillah; the aptness of the fit seems to be his preconception.

We shall try to avoid the errors into which Freehof has fallen in our analysis of the content of the private prayers. We begin with a large sample of prayers; we have observed the great variety in situations which prompt private prayer; we have noted the great variety of forms and patterns which appear in the private prayers. As we proceed to survey their content, we shall attempt to find common themes among the petitionary prayer of the rabbis even as we found common forms and patterns. We shall ask what do the rabbis seek of God; we shall ask what themes recur in the various petitions; we shall attempt to determine which themes tend to be repeated in various prayers, and how they are given expression. Thus we hope to characterize, in a general way, the content of the private prayers of the rabbis.

Examining the petitionary prayers of the rabbis as a whole does, in fact, enable us to isolate major themes which recur among the private prayers. Indeed, a variety of themes appear, but two are the most predominant among the petitions. Those two are (1) petition for elements necessary for physical well-being and (2) petitions for elements necessary to psychological and spiritual well-being.

Regarding elements of physical well-being, we find that the rabbis had no embarrassment in praying for material things. Freehof, indeed, errs in his assertion that there is very little of material request in rabbinic petition. Among the elements of physical well-being for which the rabbis pray are these: "חיים ארוכים, long life;" "חיים של פרנסה, sufficient livelihood;" "חיים של כבוד

חיים של כוח, bodily strength;" " חיים של עושר וכבוד, a life of wealth and honor." These prayers are juxtaposed with elements of psychological well-being in the prayer of Rav, a תפלת שחרית text, which Freehof himself had considered. Surely the elements in this prayer are not all "spiritual" -- it is even questionable if the rabbis ever made any such distinctions as material vs. spiritual in their approach to prayer and religion.

There are other expressions of petition for elements requisite for physical well-being. In the prayer of Rabbi, God is asked to save from " מקרה רע, an evil occurence." This term appears in other prayers too.[36] Several prayers specifically petition for restoration of health, as in this petition: " יהי רצון שיהא ניתוח זה לרפואה, May this operation be for healing."[37] Other prayers request healing by implication; Rabbi Eliezer prays: "המקום יבקרך לשלום, May the Omnipresent visit you in peace."[38] There is petition for the avoidance of " יסורים ומחלות רעות, suffering and serious illness."[39]

Physical well-being is implied in the prayer phrase " ושלח ברכה במעשה ידינו, send blessing to the work of our hands." The implied request is that the work of one's hand yield sufficient livelihood.[40] The petition for elements of physical well-being is explicit in prayers asking that Israel not lack " פרנסה, livelihood." Thus the High Priest prays: "ושמע יהי רצון שלא יצטרכו ישראל זה לזה, may Your people Israel not need sustenance

one from the other."[41] And R. Yanai prays that God "cause us not to need the gifts of men, nor hand over our food to the gifts of men, [illegible]."

The material benefits of the land, as Freehof rightly remarks,[43] are petitioned in the tefillah in the birkat ha-shanim. Private prayer, too, expresses this supplication: " [illegible], Master, may the earth yield (fruit), Master, may the earth prosper."[44]

The many prayers petitioning rain[45] are also in this category of petitions for elements of physical well-being. This clearly material request is a petition of which Freehof, because of his narrowly restricted selection of texts, is unable to take account.

There is no distinct borderline in rabbinic prayer marking the difference between physical and psychological needs. Nor does the life of man admit of such sharp distinction. Some rabbinic petitions are couched in phrases which are exceedingly general; these phrases imply elements of both physical and psychological need and well-being. Prayers for the fulfillment or good of " [illegible], all the wishes of our hearts," prayers for lives of " [illegible], goodness," and " [illegible], blessing -- which constantly recur -- convey no clear determination as to psychological or physical content. Blessing and goodness are terms which have application in both realms. And, indeed, the two realms are related in rabbinic thought. The rabbinic

adage " אין קמח אין תורה , there is no Torah without bread, "[46] summarizes the rabbinic awareness that physical well-being and psychological happiness are interdependent.

One of the petitions appearing most frequently among the private prayers is that for peace. Here, too, there is no clear distinction as to whether physical or psychological peace is implied. Indeed, it seems to me that both are implied in the prayers, though one aspect of peace may be emphasized over the other, depending on the particular context. The prayer of Rav Safra is exemplary. Rav Safra prays that there be " שלום בשמי מרומים ובשמי שחקים ובמשפחת מטה ובמשפחת מעלה ובין העוסקים בתורה, peace in the family above and the family below (inhabitants of heaven and earth) and among those who busy themselves with Torah. "[47] Implicit here is that there can be internal war among both the forces of heaven and mankind. Tranquility among heavenly and earthly beings and among the students of Torah is what is petitioned in this prayer. When, as in the prayer of R. Eliezer, the petition for שלום , for peace, is juxtaposed with " אהבה ואחוה ורעות, love, brotherhood, and friendship, " then the tranquility motif remains but is broadened to include psychological peace. The pleas for a " חיים של שלום , a life of peace," for "going in peace" or for שלום peace[48] -- which come in so many of the prayers -- imply the psychological aspect of peace, yet not to the exclusion of physical tranquility. Ultimately, both the physical and the psychological meanings of peace are related.

Petitions for elements of pyschological well-being do come with greater frequency in the private prayers than those for physical well-being. They are given expression in a very broad range of terms. Among elements of psychological well-being petitioned are the following: " לב טוב, a good heart," " סכר טוב, good reason," " אהבה אחוה ורעות, love, brotherhood and friendship." Consolation in mourning is requested in some prayers; others pray for a happy or positive outlook:

אל יבוה לבנו ועל ישכו עינינו

May our hearts be not somber nor our eyes overcast.[49]

A key aspect of rabbinic psychology is the doctrine of the יצר הרע, the evil inclination. Man is seen by the rabbis as possessing within himself two inclinations, the יצר טוב, the inclination toward good, and the יצר הרע, the inclination toward evil. Within man, these inclinations are in conflict; he is forced to be on guard, to do battle with the evil inclination. Man must subdue the evil inclination in order that he stay on the right path and act according to the divine will. The concept is explicitly stated in two similar prayers, one ascribed to R. Alexander and the other to R. Tanḥuma. We quote the latter:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהי ואלהי
אבותי שלא יקרה [illegible] על ידנו

יהי רצון מלפניך יהוה אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו שתשבר
רשעה מלבנו ותכניע יצר הרע מעלינו ותמחה
פשעינו וחטאתינו ומי מעכבך? שאור שבעיסה
שתניח לנו כדי שנוכל לעשות רצונך
ברצון שלם לפניך כרצונך שנעשה
לעתיד לבוא ותן לנו חיים טובים
לשלום ותכתבנו בספר חיים
טובים לשלום

And may it be Your will O Lord my God and God of my fathers that You break and end the yoke of the evil inclination from our hearts. For thus You have created us to do Your will -- and we are obligated to do Your will. And what prevents us from doing this desire which we desire? The leaven in the dough!
It is revealed and known to You that we haven't the strength to stand against it. But may it be Your will O Lord my God and God of my fathers to break it(s hold) from upon us and subdue it, that we may do Your will with a perfect heart. [50]

The term, " שאור שבעיסה, leaven in the dough, " is a rabbinic synonym for " יצר הרע, the evil inclination, " which is viewed by the rabbis as the source of sin through which man departs from doing God's will. [51] The יצר הרע theme appears in many of the prayers; God is usually asked in them to deliver man from the יצר הרע or to grant him a יצר טוב, a good inclination.

Subduing the evil inclination is an imperative of psychological and religious well-being. And since the evil inclination is viewed as the source of sin, an aspect of the relationship of man to God, we turn now to consider another category of private prayer petitions--petitions concerning the relationship of God and man.

The first theme among these petitions is really a two-fold theme:

forgiveness and sin. Forgiveness and sin go together as aspects of divine-human relationship. In a number of the prayers, there is an expression of man's awareness of his sinfulness, his lowly state, of the shame and disgrace which marks human life. God is asked:

" ראה בעניינו ושמע בקולנו, look upon our shame and see our evil. "[52] God's help is invoked in man's attempt to avoid shame and disgrace, the chief cause of which is sin:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו שלא
נחטא ושלא ניקוץ ושלא נכלם מאבותינו

May it be Your will O Lord our God that we not sin and that we not be disgraced or put to shame before our fathers.[53]

In some prayers man's lowly state is confessed;[54] in others, God is asked to grant a life in which there be no disgrace nor shame, but rather a life which is marked by יראת חטא, the fear of sin.[55] The confession prayers generally admit man's sinfulness and his culpability, and they usually ask God's forgiveness or His help in avoiding future sin or, in some prayers, both. The confession of R. Bibi is exemplary:

מודה אני לפניך כל רע שעשיתי לפניך
וקבלני רע בידיעתי ושוב וכל מה שעשיתי
לא אשוב כאובו. יהי רצון מלפניך ה'
אלהי שתמחל לי על כל עוונותי וסלח
לי על כל פשעי וכפר לי על כל חטאתי

I acknowledge all evil which I have done before You. In an evil way I have stood. But all that I have done, I shall not like it. May it be Your will O Lord my God to pardon me for all my iniquities, and to forgive me for all my transgressions, and to absolve me for all my sins.[56]

The rabbis also turn to God to invoke divine support, protection, and deliverance from various evils or distresses. Among prayers which ask of God deliverance and protection are prayers offered before entering a bath house or before embarking on a journey. The latter is exemplary:

מודה אני לפניך ה' אלהי שהוצאתני
מכאן לא לשלום וכשם שהוצאתני לשלום
כן תוליכני לשלום ותסמכני לשלום
והצילני משלום משנאי ומכל
כל אויב ואורב בדרך

I gratefully acknowledge before You, O Lord my God, that You brought me forth from this city in peace. And just as You brought me out in peace, so guide me in peace. Support me in peace; direct my steps in peace, and deliver me from the hand of every enemy and ambusher on the way.[57]

In this tefillat ha-derekh, God is asked to save the traveler from ambush and enemy during the journey. In numerous other private prayers, various evils evoke rabbinic pleas for deliverance. One of the most prominent among these evils from which deliverance is petitioned is that of evil companions. The rabbis pray that they may be spared from " חבר רע, a bad companion," " שכן רע, a bad neighbor," " אדם רע, an evil person," " אשה רעה, an evil woman." In some prayers, however, such requests are placed in positive terms: that God grant a good neighbor, a good friend, a good companion, etc.

In his "deliverance prayer," R. Alexander asked to be saved from the evil inclination and servitude to the government, both of which

prevent man's performance of the divine will.[58] And the prayer of Judah Ha Nasi is a typical prayer of deliverance:

יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהינו ואלהי
אבותינו שנצילנו מעזי פנים ומעזות
פנים מאדם רע ומפגע רע מיצר הרע
מחבר רע מפגע רע ומשטן המשחית
ואפילו קשה ומתדפק בדין קשה בין שהוא
בן קיים בין שאינו בן קיים

May it be Your will O Lord our God and God of our fathers to save me from arrogant people and from arrogance, from an evil person, from an evil occurrence, from an evil inclination, from a bad companion, from a bad neighbor, from the destroying adversary, and from a harsh litigant--whether he is a Jew or not a Jew.[59]

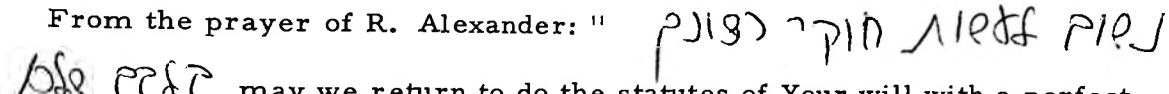
Other prayers for deliverance arise out of specific distress situations. Finally, the general theme of deliverance is expressed in this phrase from the prayers of Abahu and Mar: save us from " כל פורענות
המתרגשת לבוא לעולם, all the evils which are stirred up to enter the world."[60]

Turning to another aspect of the divine-human relationship, many of the prayers contain the theme of man's need to be aware of and to do the will of heaven. This theme is expressed in several ways. First, from the prayer of R. Ḥiyya b. Abba:

יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו
שתרחמנו ותקרבנו לעבודתך ושתהא
עבודתנו לפניך ותעשה אותנו בריאים

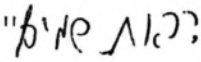
> Unite our hearts to fear Your Name, and keep us far from all that You hate and bring us near to all that You love. And deal with us charitably for the sake of Your Name.[61]

From the prayer of R. Alexander: "



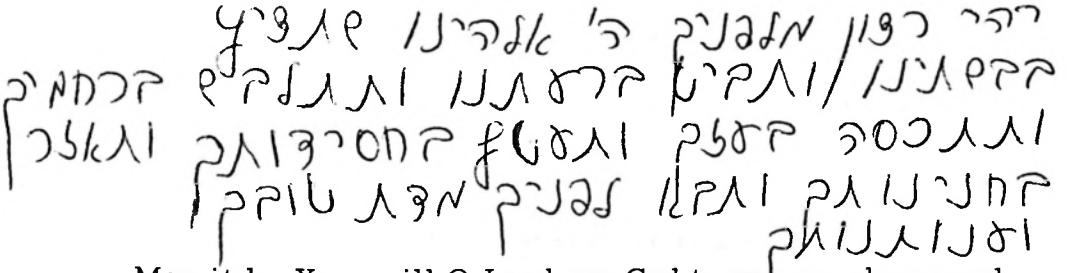
may we return to do the statutes of Your will with a perfect heart.[62] Petitions for lives filled with "

, fear of Your name," or with "



fear of heaven," are also expressive of this theme.

Petitions that God bestow his mercy upon his children present another aspect of the divine-human relationship theme. The prayer of R. Jochanan expresses this theme:



> May it be Your will O Lord our God to see our shame and to look upon our evil. And clothe Yourself in Your mercy, and cover Yourself in Your might, and wrap Yourself in Your loving kindness, and gird Yourself in Your graciousness, and let Your attribute of goodness and humility come before You.[63]

It must be noted parenthetically that the rabbis deemed prayer to be effective in cuains God to change his decree. They liken the prayer of the righteous to a spade: just as the spade turns grain from place to place, so the prayers of the righteous turn the divine attributes from wrath to mercy.[64] Thus, when in the sanctuary, R. Ishmael blesses God thusly:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו
שתגלה רחמיך על מדותיך ותתגבר על מדת
רחמים ותנהג עמהם למעלה ממדת הדין

May it be Your will that Your mercy subdue Your wrath, and may Your mercy prevail over Your other attributes. And deal with Your children in mercy, and stop short for them before the limit of strict justice.[65]

According to Rav Zutra b. Tuvia, this is the prayer which God addresses to Himself.[66]

Another theme which recurs is the petition to merit a future, a share in the world to come. In the private prayers, this request appears in a variety of forms: "... אחריתנו ותקוה, may our end be future and hope,"[67] appears in several prayers. We have, also, "... אל תכרת אחריתנו ותקוותנו תאבד נפשי, let our end not be to be cut off nor our future despair,"[68] in the prayer of R. Janai; "... ותן חלקנו בגן עדן, grant our portion in Paradise," is a phrase which appears in several of the prayers to express the petition to merit the world to come.[69]

The Torah, God's revelation to Israel, played a central role in the religious and in the life of the rabbis. Study of Torah held a high priority in the scheme of God's commandments; "תלמוד תורה כנגד כולם, the study of Torah is equal to all the other commandments" is a well-known rabbinic dictum.[70] Simon the Just held Torah to be one of the three pillars upon which the world rests: "על שלשה דברים העולם עומד: על התורה

על שלשה דברים העולם עומד, Upon three things the world stands -- on Torah, on worship, and on deeds of loving-kindness."[71] These ideas, for the rabbis, were related integrally, one to the other. "God desires the prayer of the righteous,"[72] the rabbis maintained, but, on the other hand, the prayer of persons of evil deeds was held to be tainted.[73] Nor was it deemed worthy to spend so much time in prayer that it took away from the study of Torah.[74]

Since the rabbis viewed these "pillars" of the world Torah, prayer, and righteous action to be related, it does not surprise us to find that the themes of Torah and ethical action are included among the petitions prayed for by the rabbis in their personal devotions.

The theme of Torah is repeated again and again throughout the prayers. Some prayers are wholly petitions for understanding of and devotion to Torah. In other prayers, the Torah theme is juxtaposed with other themes. The prayer of R. Ḥiyya and a prayer ascribed to both R. Alexander and to Rav Hamnuna are in the former category. First is the prayer of Ḥiyya:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו שתהא תורתך
אומנתנו ולא יהא לבנו קהה ולא עינינו
כהות

May it be Your will O Lord our God that Your Torah be our craft, that our hearts be not somber nor our eyes darkened.[75]

The prayer ascribed to Hamnuna and Alexander closes with the same line, but it opens: " יהי רצון ... שנעמידנו מקרן אחת ולפנ
May it be Your will to cause us to stand in a corner

of darkness."[76] Both these are prayers dealing with Torah. Freehof has demonstrated that the metaphor of light and darkness used in them signifies the understanding of Torah. Light here means the light of Torah: " נר מצוה ותורה אור, the commandment is a lamp; Torah, light (Proverbs 7:23)," and " מצות יי ברה מאירת עינים, the commandement of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes (Psalm 19:9)." Freehof points out that the Talmud, in commenting upon the proverb "The Lord gives light to them both (Proverbs 29:13)," says that, when a disciple comes to his teacher, asking to be taught the law, and the teacher consents, "the Lord gives light to the eyes of them both."[77] And whenever the rabbis took leave of one another, they would bless each other saying, " עיניכם יאירו בתורת אמת, May your eyes be enlightened with the light of Torah."[78] Thus Freehof correctly concludes that these prayers are prayers for enlightenment in the study of Torah.[79]

Freehof's conclusion is buttressed further by the prayer of thanksgiving offered regularly by R. Nehunia when he made his exit from the Bet Ha Midrash:

מודה אני לפניך יי אלהי שישמ חלקי
מיושבי בית המדרש ולא שמ חלקי
מיושבי קרנות. שאני משכים והם משכימים -
אני משכים לדברי תורה והם לדברי הבאי -
לדברים בטלים. אני עמל והם עמלים -

אני מודה לפניך יי אלהי שחלקי מישב בבית המדרש
ולא חלקי מישב בקרנות — אני כשאני משכים
משכימים לדברי תורה והם משכימים לדברי
שוא אני עמל והם עמלים אני עמל וקבל שכר
והם עמלים ואינם מקבלים שכר אני רץ והם רצים
לחיי העולם הבא והם רצים לבור של שחת

I gratefully acknowledge O Lord my God, that You placed my portion among those who sit in the House of Study and did not place my portion among those who dwell in corners. For I arise, and they arise--I arise to words of Torah, and they arise to vain things. I toil and they toil--I toil and receive reward, and they toil and do not receive reward. I run, and they run--I run to the life of the world to come, and they run to the pit of destruction.[80]

Rabbi Akiba, while teaching Torah, recalls his youth and offers a similar, though briefer, version of this prayer. Instead of the word "קרנות," he uses the words "שישקי קרנות," who sit at street corners in the market."[81] And in the Yerushalmi's version of Nehumia's prayer, the words of contrast to "House of Study" are "stadiums" and "circuses."[82]

The darkness and corner metaphors here clearly indicate reference to occupations and passtimes other than the study of Torah. The light metaphor in these prayers, as in the others, refers to the study of Torah.

The Torah theme appears in many other prayers as well. Rav petitions "חיים שיהא בנו אהבת תורה," a life which has in us love of Torah."[83] Mar prays: "פתח לבי בתורתך ותמצוותיך תרדוף נפשי," open my heart in Your Torah, and may my soul pursue Your commandments."[84]

Rav Safra prays for peace among all students of Torah, and he also prays that those who do not study Torah for its own sake will soon come to do so.[85] Nehumia, upon entering the Bet Ha Midrash, would pray that his teaching of Torah be proper and correct:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהי שלא
יארע קלקול על ידי ולא אכשל בדבר
הלכה וישמחו בי חבירי ולא אומר טמא
לטהור ולא טהור לטמא ולא יכשלו
חבירי בדבר הלכה ואשמח בהם

May it be Your will O Lord my God that no offence may occur through me, and that I may not err in a matter of halakha, and that my colleagues may rejoice in me; that I may not call clean, 'unclean' nor unclean, 'clean', and that my colleagues not fail in a matter of halakha, and that I may rejoice in them.[86]

The Yerushalmi version of Nehumia's prayer adds:

שלא אומר טמא טהור ולא
טהור טמא ולא יאסרו חבירי
ואהיה נקלה בעיניהם

that I may not prohibit the permitted, nor permit the forbidden, and thus be found disgraced in this world and in the world to come.[87]

Freehof points out yet another reason for rabbinic emphasis on the Torah theme in private prayer. The Torah in rabbinic thought is deemed to be a key weapon in man's arsenal against sin. Freehof quotes the Sifre:

> 'The words of Torah are compared to medicine', said God to Israel. 'I created the evil inclination. But I also created the Torah as a remedy against it. As long as you busy yourselves with it (the Torah), sin will not master you.'[88]

And in Berakhot 5a-b it is written: "כל המרבה בתורה ... מוחלין לו על כל עוונותיו, whoever busies himself with Torah... he is forgiven for all his sins."[89] Thus the Torah is a primary means for achieving ethical strength.

Among the personal prayers of the rabbis we find several which petition for specific aspects of ethical strength. Three significant examples are petitions for humility, honest speech, and avoidance of jealousy. Rabbi Janai prays for a "נפש שפלה ורוח נמוכה, a humble soul and a lowly spirit."[90] Mar. b. Rabina expressed both the former themes:

אלהי נצור לשוני מרע ושפתי
מדבר מרמה ולמקללי נפשי תדום
ונפשי כעפר לכל תהיה

> O God, keep my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceit, and to those who curse me, let my soul be quiet. And let my soul be as dust to all....[91]

The latter theme is expressed in the תפלת שחרית prayer of R. Eliezer:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהי ואלהי
אבותי שתרחיק יצרע הרע ממנו, ודבק יצרנו
הטוב בך לעשות רצונך ועבדך בלבב שלם
כדי שלא נבוש ונכלם לפניך

> May it be Your will O Lord my God and God of my fathers that hate of us not arise in the heart of any man, nor the hate of any man arise in our hearts. May jealousy of us not arise in the heart of any man, nor jealousy of any man arise in our hearts. And may Your Torah be our work all the days of our lives, and may our words be supplication before You.[92]

There is another prayer theme, prominent in the tefillah, which occurs among the private prayers, but with much less relative frequency than one might expect. That theme is petition in behalf of the nation. The theme is explicitly expressed in only five of the petition texts which I have considered. In one of the oldest texts, the High Priest prayed: "

יהי רצון שלא יצא

מפקיד מבית יהודה

, May there not depart a ruler from the house of Judah...?[93] In another Israel prays: "

אבינו מלכנו בנה בית מקדשך במהרה

Master, may the temple be rebuilt, Master when will the Temple be rebuilt?[94] Rabbi Tsadok, on viewing the ruins of the Temple, prays that God act in Israel's behalf."[95] The prayer of Rabbi Janai concludes: "

בנה בית הבחירה במהרה בימינו

build Your house, Your temple, Your city, and Your holy place speedily in our days."[96] Finally, Judah b. Tema prayed:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו ואלהי

אבותינו שיבנה בית המקדש במהרה

בימינו ותן חלקנו בתורתך

> May it be Your will that the Temple be speedily rebuilt in our days, and grant our portion in Your Torah.[97]

The infrequency of national petitions among the private prayers of the rabbis is puzzling. Perhaps one reason is that, by its very nature, private prayer focuses on the individual rather than on the group or nation. Too, the national themes for petition are well developed in the tefillah. It is possible that, to some extent at least, the national petition in the tefillah preempted personal expression of these themes, though it seems unlikely that the rabbis lacked the words or the will to expand on the themes.

It also seems logical to posit another cause for the limited number of national petitions in this category of prayer. The fact that the prayers of the Bet Ha Midrash, which constitute a large category of rabbinic prayer expression, so frequently include national petitions may cause the rabbis to emphasize these national elements less in their personal prayers. The content of Bet Ha Midrash prayer is rather restricted, and key elements of that narrow content are consolation, hope for future and national restoration, and praise of God for having given the Torah to Israel. Indeed, it is possible that the prayer of Judah b. Tema, given above, is in fact connected to the Bet Ha Midrash. For it combines two themes which fit in that category, and it is appended to a series of sermonic statements. The fact that the prayer is in second person language casts some doubt on its Bet Ha Midrash origin but the key issue is that content which is that of national restoration is more typical of a Bet Ha Midrash prayer expression than it is of the personal prayers of the rabbis.

All the observations about the content of rabbinic private prayer which we have made so far are abstractions, attempts to characterize in a general way the nature of the whole body of the petitionary prayer of the rabbis. In this general characterization, we must be careful not to distort the picture by a rigid application of general observations to specific prayers. For the separation and isolation of themes which we presented for the purpose of general analysis does not occur in the individual prayers themselves. While some prayers do only express one theme, most of the prayers, by contrast, contain many different themes all in juxtaposition. Only when we see how these themes blend and are joined in various prayers can we view accurately the content of the private prayer of the rabbis.

To facilitate this clarification, we shall consider several prayer texts and the various themes of which they are composed. First, we turn to the prayer of Mar b. Rabina, which we shall divide into ten parts:

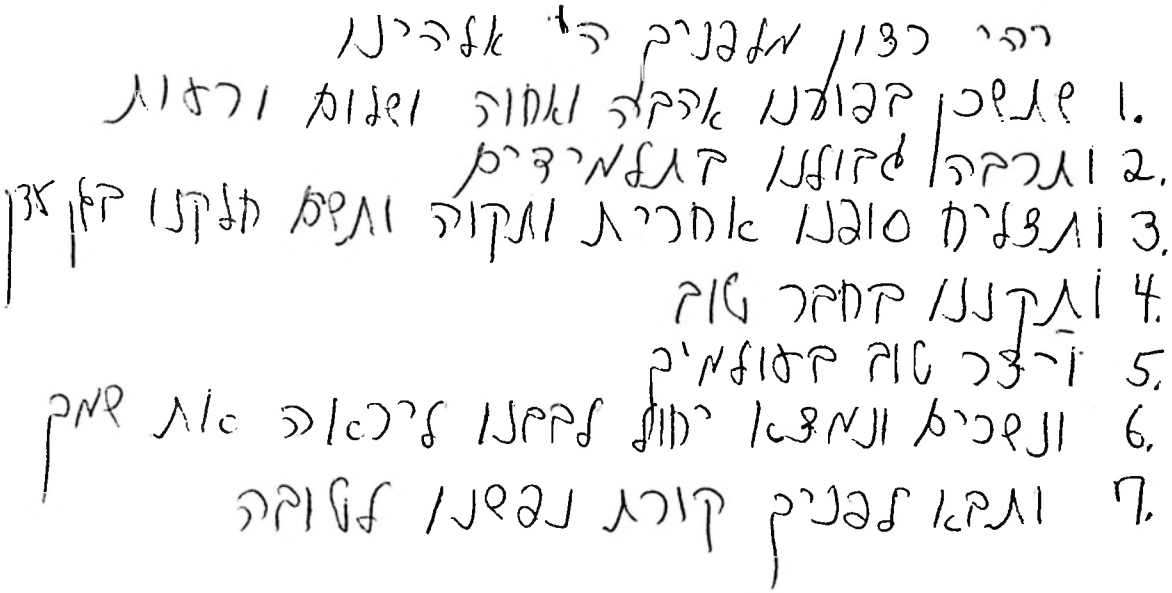
O God,

1. Keep my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceit.
2. To those who curse me may my soul be silent, and let my soul be as dust to all.
3. Open my heart to Your Torah, and let my soul pursue your commandments.
4. Deliver me from
5. an evil happening,
6. the evil inclination,
7. a bad woman,
8. and from all the evils which are stirred up to come into the world.
9. And as for those who plot evil against me -- speedily confuse their counsel and frustrate their plan.
10. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable unto You, my Rock and my Redeemer.[98]

Examining the prayer in its parts, we find that parts 1 and 2 are petitions for ethical strength, for honest words and humility. Three is the Torah theme which both stands on its own and has ethical implication, especially as it relates to overcoming the evil inclination (6). The deliverance theme is introduced in 4 and continues through 9, which petitions deliverance from the evil designs of the enemies. Five is general and may be either psychological or physical. A bad woman (7) presents the companionship theme. Eight is the general petition for deliverance from all miscellaneous evils. Ten, a concluding petition, is an expression of hope that the rabbi's words and thoughts may always

be acceptable before God. Ten might be called a variation of the theme of doing God's will.

The prayer recited by Rabbi Eleazar after his tefillah displays a similar blend of different themes.



May it be Your will O Lord our God

1. to cause to dwell in our lot love, and brotherhood, peace and friendship,
2. and increase our borders with disciples,
3. and prosper our latter end with good prospect and hope, and set our portion in Paradise.
4. Prepare for us a good companion,
5. and a good inclination in your world,
6. and may we rise early and obtain the longings of our heart to fear Your Name,
7. and may You be pleased to grant the satisfaction our desires.[99]

In analyzing this prayer, we find that part 1 deals with elements of psychological well-being. Part 2, the extention of influence through students, relates to the theme of Torah. Three concerns the future life; four introduces the companionship theme. In five, the inclination theme appears, followed by a petition for fear of heaven (6). The prayer closes

with a general wish (7) that the human and divine wills coincide, so that God might grant the petition.

The final prayer text we shall consider in order to demonstrate how the rabbis weave together various themes in their supplications is the prayer of Rav.

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו
1. שתאריך ימינו בחיים טובים
2. חיים של שלום חיים של ברכה חיים של
3. חיים של פרנסה חיים של חלוץ עצמות
4. חיים שיש בהם יראת חטא
5. חיים שאין בהם בושה וכלימה
6. חיים של עושר וכבוד
7. חיים שתהא בנו אהבת תורה
8. וחיים שתהא יראת שמים
9. חיים שתמלא כל משאלות לבנו לטובה

May it be Your will, O Lord our God
1. to give us long life,
2. a life of peace, a life of goodness, a life of blessing,
3. a life of sustenance, a life of bodily strength,
4. a life that has in it fear of sin,
5. a life that does not have shame and disgrace,
6. a life of wealth and honor,
7. a life in which we have love of Torah
8. and fear of heaven,
9. a life in which You will fulfill all the wishes of our hearts for good.[100]

Again, we have a variety of themes presented. Part one, part two, part three, part six—all petition for elements of physical well-being in very general terms. Four and five present the related themes of fear of sin and the hope to avoid the shame and disgrace which sin causes. The theme of love of Torah appears in seven; fear of heaven, in eight.

The prayer concludes with a general request that all the petitions of the heart may be found acceptable and be fulfilled for good.

This analysis of these three prayers demonstrates how the rabbis expressed many of the themes and ideas which were important to them, woven together in the words of personal prayer. These texts are especially rich in variety, yet the mixing and blending of themes is characteristic of rabbinic private prayer as a whole. The rabbis' categorization was not rigid; various ideas brought forth references to other ideas. The prayers were not planned out on a limited pattern or model. Ideas which the rabbis felt to be inter-related tended to be included together, though not necessarily so. Nor do we find any necessary order or logic to the combination of ideas. The private prayer of the rabbis is personal, and certainly the blend of themes, the weaving of ideas within the prayers, depends largely on the individual who uttered them. What we do have here, I think, is the kind of example of rabbinic thought which Max Kadushin calls 'organic thinking." We can but allude to Kadushin's notion here, but he essentially is maintaining that the rabbinic ideas and doctrines were not, for the rabbis, isolated one from the other. Rather, one idea or value concept implied, pointed to, brought with it others. One religious experience in prayer evoked memory and mention of other aspects of the experience of God's goodness and justice. And certainly among the private prayers, with their linking of themes and thoughts, there is visible this pattern of organic thinking. Rabbinic worship, Kadushin rightly holds, has ethical comcomitants and expands the horizons, associations, and religious experience of the worshipper.[101]

CHAPTER VII

THANKSGIVING PRAYERS

In our study of private prayers which appear in the Talmud and Midrash, we have discovered several prayers which do not fit the patterns which we have previously considered. We shall now consider these prayers together, categorizing them as "purely thanksgiving prayers."

We first must note that the blessings such as the birkhot ha-nehenin are essentially prayers of thanksgiving. These blessings praise and bless God and offer thanks to Him for the manifestations of divine bounty which are daily enjoyed; thanksgiving is offered for bread, for wine, for the fruits of tree and earth. Among the private prayers, there are prayers which fulfill a blessing-like function and whose essence is thanksgiving for a manifestation of divine goodness. Structurally they are not berakhot though they are similar.

Such a prayer of blessing and thanksgiving is the prayer of Abbah Ḥilkiyah; when rain came without his intercession which had been requested by the people, he prayed:

ברוך רחמיך שלא הצטרכת לחלקיה

Blessed is the Omnipresent who did not cause you to need Abbah Ḥilkiyah. [1]

This prayer over bread, an alternate to a blessing, is such a blessing-thanksgiving prayer:

כמה נאה פת זו ברוך רחמיך שבראה

How pleasant is this bread! Blessed is the Omnipresent who created it. [2]

So, too, the prayer of the rabbis when Rav Judah recovered from a serious illness:

ברוך רחמנא דיהב לכון ולא
יהב לעפרא

Blessed be the All Merciful who has given you back to us and has not given you to the dust.[3]

These, and other similar prayers, are prayers of thanksgiving which are parallel in function to the blessing formula.

In addition to these prayers which parallel the blessings, we find prayers of thanksgiving which employ the courtroom pattern and the confession style. Such a prayer is the prayer of thanksgiving recited by a person upon awaking in the morning:

a. אלהי

b. נשמה שנתת בי טהורה היא אתה
בראתה אתה יצרתה אתה נפחתה בי
והיא בקרבי אתה עתיד ליטלה ממני
ולהחזירה בי לעתיד לבא. כל זמן
שהנשמה בקרבי מודה אני לפניך ה'
אלהי ואלהי אבותי רבון כל המעשים
אדון כל הנשמות המפגיע במתים
ברוך אתה יי המחזיר נשמות לפגרים מתים)

a. My God
b. The soul which You have placed within me is pure. You created it; You have fashioned it; You have breathed it into me, and You preserve it within me. And in the future You will take it from me and return it to me in the future to come. So long as there is breath within me, I give thanks unto You, O Lord my God and God of my fathers, Master of all Worlds, Lord of all souls. (Blessed are You, Lord, who restores souls to dead bodies.)[4]

We have encountered the מודה אני formula previously with prayers of confession; the מודה אני formula, indeed, is a hallmark of the confession prayers. The opening had ancient use as a courtroom phrase for Jewish legal documents of testimony and affadavits.

The מודה אני formula is also used with great frequency in prayers which are purely thanksgiving. Upon leaving a bath house, for example, this thanksgiving prayer is offered:

מודה אני לפניך ה' אלהי
שהצלתני מן האור

I gratefully acknowledge before You, O Lord, my God, that You saved me from the furnace.[5]

Upon entering a city one prays:

מודה אני לפניך ה' אלהי
שהכנסתני בכבוד לתוך העיר

I gratefully acknowledge before You, O Lord my God that You brought me into this city in peace.[6]

A common thematic element among these prayers of thanksgiving is the fact that the thanks is offered for divine sustenance in situations of danger. Sleep was thought to be a dangerous time, since the rabbis believed that the soul left the body during sleep and was returned on awakening. The bath house presented the physical danger of illness and also the danger of perversion; travel presented the dangers of ambush, Robbery, and loss of the way. Another thanksgiving prayer using the courtroom-confession pattern, which thanks God for bringing one from darkness into light, may also be construed as a kind of thanks for divine sustenance in the dangerous time of night. Thus did R. Samuel b. Nachman pray each morning:

מודה אני לפניך ה' אלהי
שהוצאתני מאפלה לאורה

I gratefully acknowledge before You, O Lord my God, that You brought me from darkness to light.[7]

As we observed earlier, Heinemann holds prayers of thanksgiving and prayers of confession which use the courtroom pattern to be, in essence, two sides of the same coin. In the former category, God's bounty is acknowledged and, with it, the obligation to give thanks to him is confessed. In the latter category, God's knowledge of man's deeds and thoughts is acknowledged, and his own sinfulness and humility before God is confessed.[8]

We find yet another group of prayers which are purely thanksgiving; these are prayers which express man's thanks to God for bestowing rain. The first prayer, the prayer of R. Jochanan opens with a standard confession pattern and proceeds in poetic style:

מודים אנחנו לך על כל טפה וטפה שהורדת
לנו. אלו פינו מלא שירה כים ולשוננו רנה
כהמון גליו ושפתותינו שבח כמרחבי רקיע
ועינינו מאירות כשמש וכירח ידינו פרושות
כנשרי שמים ורגלינו קלות כאילות —
אין אנחנו מספיקים להודות לך ה'
אלהינו ...

We thank You for each and every drop which You have caused to fall for us.
If our mouths were filled with song as the sea,
and our tongues with gladness like many waves,
and our lips with praise like the expanse of the firmament,
and our eyes alight like the sun and like the moon,
and our hands spread forth like the eagles of heaven,
and our feet as swift as mountain goats --
we would not suffice to thank You, O Lord our God....[9]

The other prayers of thanksgiving for rain are different in style from this prayer of R. Yochanan. Common to this prayer and to all but one of the others is the phrase " על כל טפה וטפה, for

each and every drop," a phrase which must have been popular and familiar, and thus was freely used by different rabbis in their thanksgiving prayers. Another common phrase which appears in many of these prayers of thanksgiving for rain is " אלפי אלפים ורבי רבבות ," which literally means "thousand thousands and myriad of myriads," and which we shall render "countless." We shall now present a number of these thanksgiving for rain texts and then make some observations about them as a group.

Thus the father of Rav Judah b. Ezekiel blessed:

יתברך יתרומם ויתנשא שמך מלכנו
תמיד על כל טפה וטפה שאתה מוריד לנו
ועל כל אחת ואחת מאתנו

May Your name be blessed, exalted, and magnified for each and every drop which You bring down for us and keep apart one from the other.[10]

Jose b. Jacob heard R. Judan of Magdala praying thusly:

אלפי אלפים ורבי רבבות קבלנו ונקבל
אותנו בכיכר שבוקעין בשמך על כל טפה
וטפה שאתה מוריד לנו שלעגה מאוסת
ומגונה

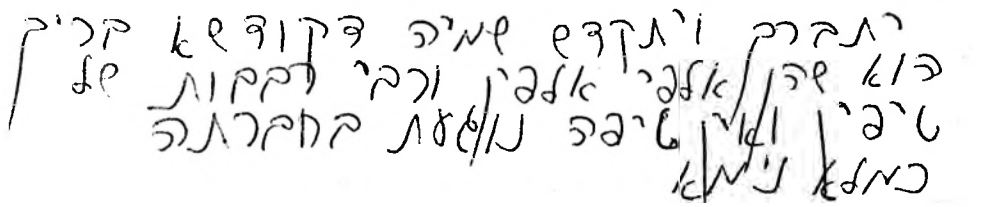
Countless blessings and thanks we must give to Your name for each and every drop which You bring down for us, wherewith You give good recompense to the unworthy.[11]

Rav Judah b. Ezekiel prayed:

על כל טפה וטפה שהורדת
מי שכח ובית הרשעת שבזכות
אלפי אלפים ורבי רבבות של מפלכיות

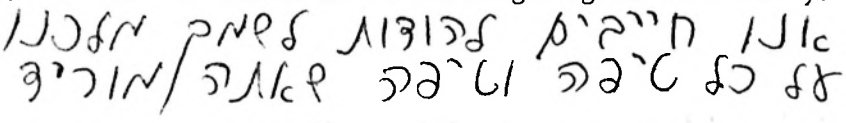
> May the name of He who Spoke and the world was be glorified and magnified and blessed for he has countless angels for each and every drop which comes down. [12]

And in the Midrash on Psalm 18:16, Rav Judah gives another prayer in the name of his father, Ezekiel, this one using Aramaic:



> May the name of the Holy One blessed be He be blessed and sanctified for the countless drops -- and not one drop touches another. [13]

Finally, R. Jose b. Jacob offers thanksgiving for rain thusly:



> We are obligated to give thanks to your name, our King, and each and every drop which you bring down. [14]

What observations may we make about these prayers? Do they fit any specific pattern? At first blush there is great resemblance among these texts and the prayers of Bet Ha Midrash origin. The use of several verbs of praise in the hitpael is a regular feature of Bet Ha Midrash prayer. The third person style characteristic of the Bet Ha Midrash form is used in the prayer of Rav Judah and in the second prayer attributed to his father. There is no use of  or  to refer to God; the appellations for God used characteristically in Bet Ha Midrash prayer are used in several of these prayers; the praise theme is also consonant with the pattern. The prayers are compact.

The second prayer of R. Jose b. Jacob is similar in form and content to the prayer of Bet Ha Midrash origin in the Haggadah which we previously noted.[15]

Though we are tempted to categorize these prayers as of Bet Ha Midrash origin, on close inspection of them we find that something is not quite right. What troubles us is the use of the second person in addressing God. This is distinctly uncharacteristic of Bet Ha Midrash prayers.

In view of this problem, we suggest that what appears in these prayers of thanksgiving for rain is a hybrid form of prayer -- an adaptation of Bet Ha Midrash style for prayer recited in a place other than the Bet Ha Midrash. The reason for the imitation of Bet Ha Midrash style is probably that it was particularly familiar and appropriate for the expression of praise and thanksgiving. And the switch into the second person in addressing God may well have been added to give a more personal touch to the expressing of thanks to God who graciously bestowed his gift of rain upon his children.

Thus we have essentially three types of prayers which are purely prayers of thanksgiving. They form a separate group of prayers, though each of the types of prayers within the group shows affinity with another pattern of prayer which we have previously considered. Our first prayers of thanksgiving parallel in function the liturgical blessing which expresses thanksgiving for a manifestation of God's goodness. The second set of prayers of thanksgiving are prayers which display

the courtroom-confession form and which acknowledge divine sustenance. And finally, the prayers of thanksgiving for rain are prayers which seem clearly influenced by the Bet Ha Midrash prayer pattern, and are probably an adaptation by the rabbis of that prayer pattern.

CHAPTER VIII

BLESSINGS A MAN BLESSES HIS FELLOW

Another type of prayer which comes easily to the lips is found in the rabbinic sources; that prayer is the personal blessing in which a man invokes God's blessing upon his fellow. The Bible contains many such blessings. Micah's mother blesses her son: "ברוך הנך לה', Blessed be my son to the Lord."[1] Saul blesses Samuel: "ברוך אתה לה', Blessed be you to the Lord."[2] And Melchizedek blesses Abraham: "ברוך אברם לאל עליון, Blessed be Abraham to God the Most High."[3] Another well known blessing from the bible is the Priestly Blessing.[4]

We find the blessing of one man by another in the private prayer of the rabbis, as well, but the rabbinic style of such blessings is different, for the most part, from that of the Biblical blessings. The first major difference is that the Biblical form "ברוך אתה לה'" does not appear in the blessings uttered by the rabbis. Dr. Heinemann suggests that the Biblical formulation resembled too closely the formula for the liturgical berakhah and that the rabbis, who severely restricted use of the berakhah formula, wanted to avoid potential confusion which might result from using the Biblical pattern.[5]

Only a few of the rabbinic personal blessings use the tetragrammaton at all.[6] Instead they employ standard rabbinic appellations for deity. Very few of the rabbinic personal blessings, unlike their Biblical counterparts, use the second person form of address. The word "אתה, You" is avoided, again, we must assume, in order to assure differentiation from the berakhah.

There are but a few of these personal blessings which use the word " ברוך ." For example, a guest blesses his host: " ברוך בעל הבית, Blessed is (my) host."[7] A blessing of Mordecai is recorded: " ברוך מרדכי, Blessed is Mordecai."[8] More common, however, is the use of another form of the same verbal root, ברך, to bless. This is exemplified in a blessing which people bless a priest who is in mourning: "יתברכו לעילא מן שמיא, Be blessed to heaven."[9] The Aramaic form of the root ברך is also used frequently. Most prayers in this category, however, seem to avoid the use of the ברך root. This further indicates that the rabbis were striving carefully to distinguish their private blessings from the pattern of the liturgical berakhah.

We find that the blessing of one man by another is prompted by a variety of occasions and circumstances. Mourning and illness, particularly, prompt the response of consolation and blessing. Two blessings said to mourners are exemplary: " מן דשרי שכינתא בהדי, May He who dwells in this house comfort you,"[10] and " מרא דנחמתא ינחם יתכם, May the Master of Consolations console you."[11] When a man's slave dies one says to him: " המקום ימלא מחסרונך May the Omnipresent fill your loss."[12]

Rabba b. Bar Hanah reported two prayers of R. Eleazer which Eleazar spoke when he visited the sick: " המקום יפקוד, May the Omnipresent visit you for peace," and " המקום

יזכרך לשלום, May the All-Merciful remember you for peace."[13] R. Jose, when he visited the sick, would pray: "המקום ירחם עליך ועל חולי ישראל, May the Omnipresent have mercy upon you and among the sick of Israel." R. Judah used to pray: "המקום ירחם עליך ועל חולי ישראל, May the Omnipresent have mercy upon you and upon the sick of Israel.[14] And Resh Lakish quoted a prayer used to bless a woman in labor by those attending her: "מי שענה את אמך הוא יענך, May He who answered your mother answer you."[15]

Customarily, when people took leave of one another, they parted with a blessing. Several of these blessings have been recorded. One particularly humorous example is the blessing with which Rav, whose wife constantly tormented him, blessed R. Ḥiyya upon leaving him: "רחמנא ליצלן מיד דקשה ממיתה, May the All Merciful deliver you from that which is worse than death."[16] Thus Judah Ha Nasi blessed R. Simeon b. Ḥalafta: "יהי רעון שלא תביש ולא תתבייש, May it be (God's) will that you not bring disgrace nor be disgraced."[17] Often when rabbis took leave of each other they said: "עיניך יאירו במאור תורה, May your eyes be enlightened with the light of Torah."[18] And, with a touch of irony, Jochanan b. Zakkai blessed his disciples before his death: יהי רצון שתהא מורא שמים עליכם כמורא בשר ודם

May it be (God's) will that the fear of heaven be upon you like the fear of flesh and blood.[19]

Deeds of especial merit, kindness, or devotion evoked blessings. When Abba Judan, who had given generously to the scholars, had bad luck, so that there remained to him but one field from all his wealth, his wife advised him to sell half of it so he might give them charity. For this act of kindness, the rabbis bless Abba Judan: " המקום ימלא מסכונך , May the Omnipresent fill your loss.'[20]

R. Joseph, the teacher of Rabba, was blind. When Rabba left his master, he would walk backward, out of respect, and would bruise his feet on stones. The threshold of R. Joseph's house became stained with blood. When people told this to R. Joseph, he blessed Rabba, saying " רבא כל קרתא דידך עלואי כולה כרכא , May it be (God's) will that you raise your head above the whole city." (Rabba later became head of the academies of Sura and Pumpeditha.)[21]

Other deeds of kindness elicit personal blessings. R. Jose of Yodkart had employed laborers to work in his field. It grew dark, yet R. Jose had not brought them food. At their complaint, the son of R. Jose found a fig tree and ordered it to bring forth fruit. It did so, and the men ate. When R. Jose finally arrived with food and returned apologetically, the laborers said to him: " כי מישבע משבע רחמנא , May the All Merciful satisfy your hunger as your son has satisfied ours."[22]

Upon receiving a favorable judgment a man blessed his rabbinic judge: " יהא רעות מלפני המקום דיין

כשם שדנת אותי לכף זכות, And as for you, just as you judged me favorably, so may the Omnipresent judge you favorably."[23]

When Rav Papa was seeking Samuel that he might study with him, a lady, whom he asked of Samuel's whereabouts, said to him: " יהי רצון שתהא כמותו, May it be (God's) will that you be like him." And when Rav Papa failed to resolve a halakhic matter at a feast, he prayed thusly for the guests: " יהי רצון שיאכל שור זה בשלום, May it be (God's) will that this bull be eaten in peace (ie., that his failure not disturb the feast)."[24]

Finally, when R. Jose b. Saul reminds Judah Ha Nasi of a text which he had forgotten, Rabbi blesses him saying: " ברוך אתה לשמים שהחזרת לי אבידתי, Blessed are You to heaven for having restored my loss to me."[25] This blessing is one of the relatively few texts where the words " ברוך אתה לשמים " are used. As we noted previously, the rabbis generally avoided this usage so as to prevent confusion with the berakhah formula.

Another type of personal blessing is that which the people would say in response to certain benedictions and the shofar blasts. An example is this response to the seventh blessing and the call "tekiah":

מי שענה לאבינו אברהם בהר המוריה הוא יענה לכם ויאזין לקול תקיעתכם

May He who answered our father Abraham at Mount Moriah answer you and hearken to the voice of your crying.[26]

When asked by his disciples if he could be quoted on a certain

decision which he gave, R. Ḥisda responded to his pupils:

יהא רעוא קמך כי הני מילי
מתנייא ולגבי מיתיבי

May it be (God's) will that you lecture all good things of this sort in my name.[27]

And in the Temple times, the men of the mishmar would bless one another, the outgoing watch saying to the incoming one:

מי שהכין את שמו בבית הזה
בראשונה הוא יכין בינכם אהבה
ואחוה ושלום ורעות

May He who caused His Name to dwell in this house cause to dwell among you love and brotherhood, peace and friendship.[28]

We have observed exemplary texts of this category of personal blessings and have noted the variety of occasions which elicit such blessings. We turn now to make observations concerning the patterns and forms of style which recur in the personal blessings with which the rabbis blessed people.

One of the key features of these prayers is the nearly exclusive use of the rabbinic appellations for God in brief prayer texts. Most frequently used names for God are "המקום, the Omnipresent," and "רחמנא, the All Merciful," but others are used as well. The brief form of the "יהי רצון" formula is used, very frequently in Aramaic: "יהא רעוא."

There is frequent use of third person reference to God in the third person. "May the Omnipresent judge...." "May He who heard our father hear...." The third person style is used characteristically in

prayers from the Bet Ha Midrash, and thus was a form particularly familiar to the rabbis. The personal blessings use Aramaic with great frequency. This seems a natural phenomenon since the blessings were usually spontaneous, and Aramaic was the spoken language of the period. The language of the prayers is simple, brief, and of conversational tone.

Most of the blessings of this type arise from the common, every-day life of the rabbis. The exceptions to this among the prayers we have collected here are, of course, the formal responses to the public fast day reader and the men of the mishmar. But the vast majority of the personal blessings arise from daily situations and experiences. The common, conversational style reflects the content, which is neither complex nor exalted. Some of the blessings are very general, praying for blessing, comfort, health, the fulfilling of wishes, the avoidance of disgrace. These themes are typical of rabbinic petitionary prayers. Some prayers are exceedingly specific -- the requests therein are tied inseparably to the situation eliciting the prayer.

There is a variant of this category of personal blessings which we shall consider by reference to two examples. In these examples, the individual is not blessed directly; rather, the action of a person elicits a blessing to God. Such a blessing is prompted by the especially gracious behavior of Rabba. R. Awia visited Rabba with muddy boots, and he tracked up the house -- much to Rabb'a annoyment. But Rabba, containing his ire, did not embarass Awia. This prompted a witness,

R. Nachman b. Isaac to pray: "ברוך רחמנא דלא כסיבית לרבא לבייש לאיבא", Blessed is the All Merciful that Rabba did not put R. Aiwa to shame."

The next example, the longest of the prayers of this category, is prompted by Eleazar b. Arach's brilliance in expounding on matters of mysticism. His teacher, R. Jochanan b. Zakkai blesses God for Eleazar's brilliance and appends words of praise for his student.

ברוך ה' אלהי ישראל אשר נתן בן
לאברהם אבינו יודע לבקר ולפשר
לכבוד אביו שבשמים יש שלומד פרש
ואין שלמד מקרא שלמד תרגום ואין
שלמד פרש ושלמד מקרא ותרגום

Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel, who gave a son to Abraham our father who knows to understand and to expound to the glory of his father in heaven. There are those who expound well but don't do well. There are those who do well, but don't expound well. Eleazar b. Arach expounds well and does well.[30]

It would seem that in this blessing R. Jochanan is intentionally imitating the lofty style of the Biblical blessing such as we find offered by Solomon in his address at the dedication of the temple:

ברוך ה' אלהי ישראל אשר דבר
בפיו את דויד אבי...

Blessed is the Lord who spoke personally with David my father and empowered him.[32]

The blessings which the rabbis bless people with are simple, varied,

and seem to arise spontaneously out of every-day life situations. And as a word of final postscript to our consideration of this category of personal blessings, we must remark that the same form may be employed for the opposite purpose -- to curse. Thus Rabba prayed a curse upon Bar Hedya who gave bad interpretations of his dreams:

כך הוא רצון מלפני מי שגלגל חמה ביד
אנשי ממשלה שלא ירחם עליו

> May it be (God's) will to hand that man into the hands of the government, and that it not show mercy upon him.[31]

CHAPTER IX

THE יהי חסדך AND אל נא PETITIONS

Prayer is a certain kind of religious expression, but it is no simple task to set precise boundaries to delimit what formally constitutes a prayer. Regarding the prayers we have previously studied, there would be little uncertainty in identifying them as prayers. The blessing is clearly recognizable as a prayer form. The formula " יהי רצון מלפניך וכו', May it be Your will that, etc. " cannot be easily used in a manner other than prayer. Prayers of the courtroom pattern leave little room for doubt that -- implicity or explicitly -- the Supreme Judge of the Universe is the recipient of the plea. Nor do we find it difficult to classify as prayers those texts from the Bet Ha Midrash which praise and glorify God.

But at the border, at the outer limits, there is a question. Jews, for example, even in our own day, are apt to use -- in connection with almost any kind of statement -- such interpolations as " אם ירצה השם , God willing, " or " בעזרת השם, with God's help, " or " ברוך השם , thank God. " We hear these terms used daily: "I shall receive semikha this June, God willing." "With God's help, I'll finish my research before semester's end." "I'm feeling well, thank God!" Surely these statements -- even with the prayerful interpolations -- do not constitute prayer texts.

The problem of definition for our study here arises in regard to a form of expression which we find in the Talmud. We find brief statements or "prayers" which begin with the words, " יהי חלקי , May my portion be, " or " יהי לי , May I be

rewarded." Thus would Rabbi Jose say: " יהי חלקי עם הרואים את החמה בנץ החמה, May my portion be among those who pray with the red glow of the sun." Thus would Rav Judah say: " אשרי מי שזוכה לראות בתפלה כהלכה, May I be rewarded for observing devotion in prayer."[1]

Such texts appear from time to time in the Talmud, but the largest collection of them is found in Shabbat 118a-119a. Are these statements to be considered as prayers? Or shall we deem them to be more interpolations of pious wishes? It is clear that these texts are expressions of pious hopes. They are certainly not prayers offered from the depths of trouble or thankfulness, sorrow or need, or from any existential crisis. Further, there is no actual address to God. I believe, however, that we may properly classify these texts, examples of which we shall examine, as prayers. In the first place, these statements do address God, though by implication. "אשרי מי" literally means "may reward come to me;" implicit is the understanding that that reward would come only from heaven. The content, too, buttresses this contention: when man observes devotion in prayer and hopes for reward, from whom else but God could the reward for such devotion be forthcoming.

The formula "יהי חלקי עם" appears to be even more equivocal, yet it, too, addresses God implicitly. We have observed in other prayers that an accepted and often used phrase is "חלקנו בתוך," which may be rendered as "Grant our portion in," or "may our lot be

in." Thus "תן חלקנו בתורתך, grant our portion in Your Torah," from the kedushat ha-yom blessing of the Sabbath tefillah;[2] and "שמת חלקי עם יושבי בית המדרש, You have placed my portion among those who sit in the House of Study," from the prayer of R. Nehunia;[3] and "תן חלקנו בגן עדן, may our lot be in Paradise," from the prayer of R. Eleazar[4]-- in each of these examples God is specifically asked to grant that the portion or lot of the petitioner be such and such. It is in this sense that we must understand the formula "יהי חלקי עם" to be addressing God with a request.

Further, these prayers deal with religious themes. They express religious ideals which the rabbis hold to be particularly important. They are personal wishes for virtuous religious behavior. The content of these petitions is itself evidence for classifying them as a category of prayer.

As we examine the prayers, we shall find them to be nearly identical in structure one to the other. They employ both Hebrew and Aramaic. As we have noted, their content deals with concern for religious observances.

Rabbi Jose prayed: "יהי חלקי עם שגומרי הלל בכל יום." May my lot be among those who finish the Hallel daily." The Talmud appends an explanation of this prayer: An objection is raised which quotes a prohibition of daily recitation of the Hallel. The contradiction is resolved with the explanation that Rabbi Jose is referring here to the

recitation of the pesuke d'zimra, morning psalms for individual recitation.[5]

Rabbi Jose also prayed: "יהי חלקי מאכלי עקרי בטבריא ושמאי בציפורי, May it be my lot to be among those who greet the Sabbath in Tiberias and send it forth in Sephoris."[6] In Tiberias, situated in a valley, the Sabbath begins early; in Sephoris, located on a mountain, the Sabbath ends later. Thus Rabbi Jose is asking that he be counted among those who honor the Sabbath punctiliously by greeting it early and observing it until as late a moment as possible.

These three prayers of Jose which we have cited all share the same theme: hope that his religious observance be proper and deeply pious. This, too, is the theme of Judah's petition that he be granted reward for devotion in prayer. This, too, is the theme of prayers by R. Jose and Rav Nachman that they may be among those who observe the custom of eating a third meal on the Sabbath, a ceremony of special Sabbath joy and piety: "יהי חלקי משלשי עונגי שבת, May my portion be among those who eat three meals on the Sabbath; " זכיני ר' פקיעא ג' סעודות, May I be rewarded for observing three meals on the Sabbath."[7] The same theme -- religious devotion -- is found in the prayer of R. Jochanan that he be among those who sanctify the moon and make a special feast thereafter: " יהי חלקי עם אכלי בכא דליליא, May my lot be among those who eat thus at night."[8]

Another theme found in prayers of this category is concern for the performance of religious duties. Rabbi Jose prays: "יהי חלקי מאלו שמתים בדרך מצוה, May my lot be among those who die on the way to the performance of a religious duty."[9] Rav Sheshet prays: "יהי רצון שאזכה למצות תפילין." May I be rewarded for observing the precept of tefillin."[10] Rav Nachman prays: "יהי רצון שאזכה למצות ציצית." May I be rewarded for observing the duty of the fringes."[11]

The importance of study as a religious duty is seen in the prayer of R. Jose: "יהי חלקי מיושבי בית המדרש ולא מהמשכימים לבית המדרש, May my lot be among those who (seat pupils) in the House of Study and not among those who order them to rise and depart." Rashi explains that "they who seat" refers to those who collect the students and that "those who order them to rise" refers to the ones who adjourn the studies for meals.[12] Jose, thus, wants to be one who devotes time to study, not one who takes away from from studies. The joy the rabbis felt in this <u>mitzvah</u> of study is seen in the prayer of Abaye:

> יהי רצון שאזכה על שראיתי תלמיד שסיים מסכתו ועשיתי יום טוב לחכמים

> May I be rewarded for that, when I saw a disciple had completed his tractate, I made it a festive day for the scholars.[13]

These prayers also reflect the rabbis' deep personal concern for

deeds of justice and righteousness. Thus Rabbi Jose prayed: "יהי חלקי עם עושי צדקה בכל עת, ואל יהי חלקי עם עושי צדקה לא בכל עת. May my lot be among those who collect charity and not among those who give it out."[14] Only the former, Rashi points out, could act with complete impartiality. In this spirit, too, Rabbah prayed:

יהי רצון מלפניך שלא אבוש מתלמידי שבכל יום ויום ואומר לו שמועה ערב שבת שהלכה למעשה בה

May I be rewarded because, when a disciple came to me in a lawsuit, I did not lay my head upon my pillow before I had sought points in his favor.[15]

These יהי חלקי and יהי רצון petitions, which address God by implication, are prayerful expressions of the rabbis' concern for religious virtues. The themes contained in these prayers -- Torah, piety, good deeds -- are typical of the themes found in other categories of private prayer, but here they are more specific in their statement of the particular actions. The esteem in which the rabbis held these specific mitzvot is emphasized by their desire to be included themselves among those who were known for such observances and actions. Though this category of prayer is not highly developed stylistically nor varegiated in content, it does stand as worthy of inclusion in our study of rabbinic private prayer.

In words of final postscript, we mention our surprise that use of this prayer form is so narrowly confined to subjects of a religious nature. On one hand, this speaks highly for the spirituality of the

rabbis and demonstrates the high level of the values they deemed important. But one must conjecture, too, that the form probably had further use by the rabbis and the people in general. The simplicity of the pattern and the fact that God is not mentioned -- thus avoiding any possibility of blasphemous or frivolous reference to God -- suggest that this pattern was likely used by the people for prayers of an equally personal, but less spiritually exalted nature.

CHAPTER X

RABBINIC PRAYER PLACED IN THE MOUTH OF BIBLICAL PERSONALITIES

For the rabbis, prayer was an essential fact of religious life. Prayer was both an obligation and a spontaneous response, the most natural of religious expressions. So integral was prayer in the religious life of the rabbis that they instinctively believed prayer to have held a similar place in the religious life of their forefathers. Not only did the rabbis attribute the origin of the three required tefillot to the Patriarchs -- shaharit to Abraham, mincha to Isaac, and ma-ariv to Jacob -- but they also, in their haggadic exposition of the Scriptures, placed prayers in the mouths of Biblical personalities.

There are, of course, prayers spoken in the Bible. We have observed, however, that for the most part Biblical prayer is generally distinct in language, style, and, to some extent, in content from the prayers of the rabbinic period. And one of the most interesting features of the prayers which the rabbis placed in the mouths of Biblical personalities is the fact that such prayers are distinctly rabbinic prayers. They display the various characteristics and forms which we have found to be typical of the private prayer of the rabbis.

A glance at the footnotes for the prayer texts which we have cited previously shows that the bulk -- though by no means all -- of the private prayers which we have considered thus far come from the Talmud. By contrast, the great majority of the prayers to which we now turn, the prayers which the rabbis placed in the mouths of Biblical personalities, are from various of the compilations of the Midrash. Nor is this fact surprising, for the Midrash is primarily a commentary upon the

Bible following the narrative itself. The prime purpose of the rabbis in their midrashic explanation of Scripture was to teach, to explain, to clarify, the dramatize the religious significance of the lives and the actions of the great Biblical personalities who, thus, become religious paradigms for their descendants. Through midrashic interpretation, the Bible personalities become models of piety and humanity for the Jews of later generations to emulate. In this exposition, the rabbis imaginatively enhanced the Biblical materials with stories, ideas, events, and other materials which served to illuminate the teaching of God in which every word had been economically chosen and was filled with significance. It is in the context of this midrashic interpretation and exposition that the rabbis placed prayers into the mouths of Biblical personalities. Such prayers, however, whether cited in the name of a rabbi or given anonomously, were very much the prayers of the rabbis themselves.

We shall now proceed to examination of examples of these prayers placed in the mouth of Biblical characters, inspecting first the forms and patterns they employ, then surveying their content and comparing it to the content of other private rabbinic prayers.

A variety of forms are used for these prayers ascribed to Biblical figures. Occasional prayers use the liturgical berakhah formula. According to R. Eliezer, Moses, after receiving the Torah, pronounced the following blessing:

ברוך אתה ה' אשר בחר בתורה הזאת
וקדשה ורצה בעושיה

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, who chose this Torah and made it holy and delighted in those who do it. [1]

The context here is the discussion of a halacha requiring the recitation of a blessing before the reading of the Torah. This blessing of Moses is cited as precedent for the law.

There are several prayers which exhibit characteristics of prayers whose origin is in the Bet Ha Midrash, though surprisingly, such prayers in the mouth of Biblical personalities are rare. Perhaps it is because the subject matter of the Bet Ha Midrash is narrowly circumscribed. One example of such a prayer is the prayer which R. Jochanan b. Eliezer placed in the mouth of Joshua:

ברוך שבחר בצדיקים ובמשנתם

Blessed is He who chose righteous men and their teaching. [2]

Here the use of the Bet Ha Midrash third person style is particularly appropriate to the context in which the prayer was offered by Joshua: the prayer was uttered as the opening to his first public derasha.

Occasionally placed in the mouth of Biblical personalities are petitions which use the רבש"ע formula. Thus Leah prayed as she wept over what people forecast was to be her destinated marriage to Esau:

רבש"ע גלוי וידוע לפניך שאין
חלקי עם רשע

> May it be (God's) will that I not fall to the lot of that wicked man.[3]

At other times, as we shall see, the לא יהי רצון formula introduces the petition section of a prayer of courtroom pattern.

Though we do find such occasional uses of the berakhah, Bet Ha Midrash, and brief לא יהי רצון petitionary prayers, by far the most frequent form of rabbinic prayer placed in the mouth of Biblical personalities is the courtroom pattern of prayer. These prayers attributed to Bible characters are, in fact, examples par excellence of the courtroom prayer form. For, unlike ordinary mortals, the righteous men of the Biblical generations have extraordinary זכות, merit wherewith to address a plea for favorable judgment to the Judge of the Universe. As their status is higher, their pleas can be more direct. As the situations which they faced were often of cosmic significance -- from the perspective of the rabbis -- they could be allowed a greater forthrightness and pointedness in prayer that would seem presumptious from an ordinary mortal. And, too, the prayers which the great ancestors spoke were often uttered in situations of extreme sorrow or distress.

Turning to specific prayers which employ the courtroom pattern, let us notice especially the variety of argumentation used in the plea section of the prayers.

An a fortiori, קל וחומר argument is used by a distressed Hezekiah in his prayer for restoration of health:

a. רבש"ע

b. ואם שונמית שעשתה עלייה קטנה אחת קנה, אמרת
להחיות בנה לה, אני שכל היכלות של הבית כולו כסף
וזהב עשה אבי אבי ואמי

c. זכר נא את אשר התהלכתי לפניך באמת ובלבב שלם
והטוב בעיניך עשיתי

a. Master of the Universe!
b. If, regarding the Shunammite woman who made only one little chamber, You restored her son to life (Jer. 4:19), how much the more so then for me, whose ancestor overlaid the Temple with gold.
c. "Remember now, O Lord, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart, and I have done that which is good in Your sight (Isaiah 38:17)."[4]

By this a fortiori argument, Hezekiah persuades God that a favorable verdict is due him. Note, too, that the request for healing is implied, but not specified, in the petition which is expressed in the words of a Biblical verse.

The prayers placed into the mouth of Hannah by the rabbis are quite interesting. In one, Hannah appeals to the very nature of God's creation -- namely the physical characteristics of woman -- to buttress her plea that God should grant her a son:

a. רבש"ע

b. כל אימת שאדם עושה רצונך אתה קורא עליו
שמו בתורה בן בתי בנים אתה קורא עליו שמו
בתורה בן בתי בנות

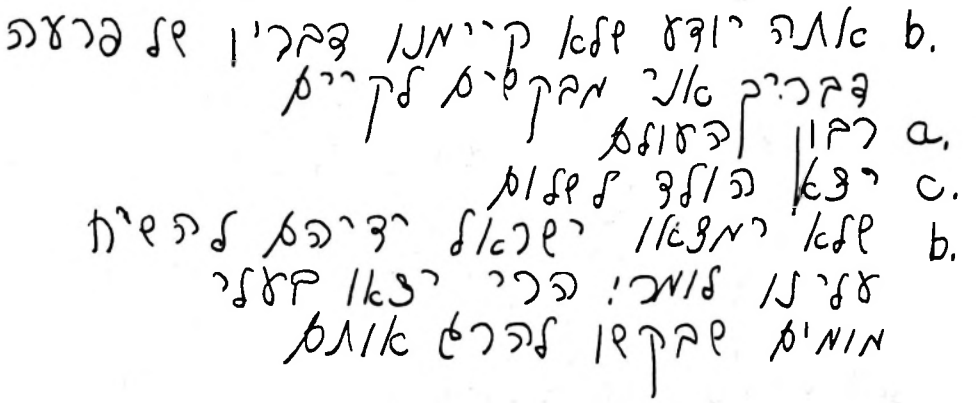
a. Master of the Universe!
b. All that You have created in a woman, You have created not one without a purpose: eyes to see, ears to hear, a nose to smell, a mouth to speak, hands with which to do work, feet with which to walk, breasts with which to give suck. These breasts which You have placed on my heart, are they not to give suck?
c. Give me a son that I may give suck with them![5]

Rabbi Eleazar, speaking in the name of R. Jose b. Zimra, however, was not content with this prayer. Even from Hannah he deemed it insolent, and quotes it as a type of prayer which men should avoid uttering.

In the hour of his death, Moses argued in his plea (b) that human nature justified his petition that new leaders be chosen by God for Israel:

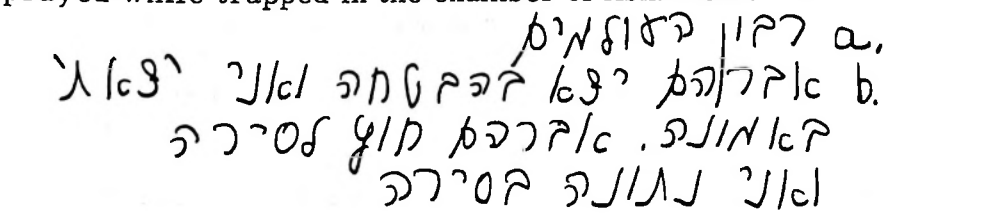
a. Master of the Universe!
b. The mind of each person is revealed and known to You, and the minds of your children are not like one another. Now that I am leaving them,
c. please appoint over them leaders who will bear with each one of them according to his temperament.[6]

Both their daring faithfulness and the inexorable facts of the situation in which they found themselves are cited in the plea justifying the prayer of the Egyptian midwives:



b. You know that we did not do the command of Pharaoh; Your commandments we seek to do.
a. Lord of the World,
c. Let the child come out safely
b. so that Israel find no opportunity to accuse us saying: 'Behold they have come out blemished because they sought to kill them.'[7]

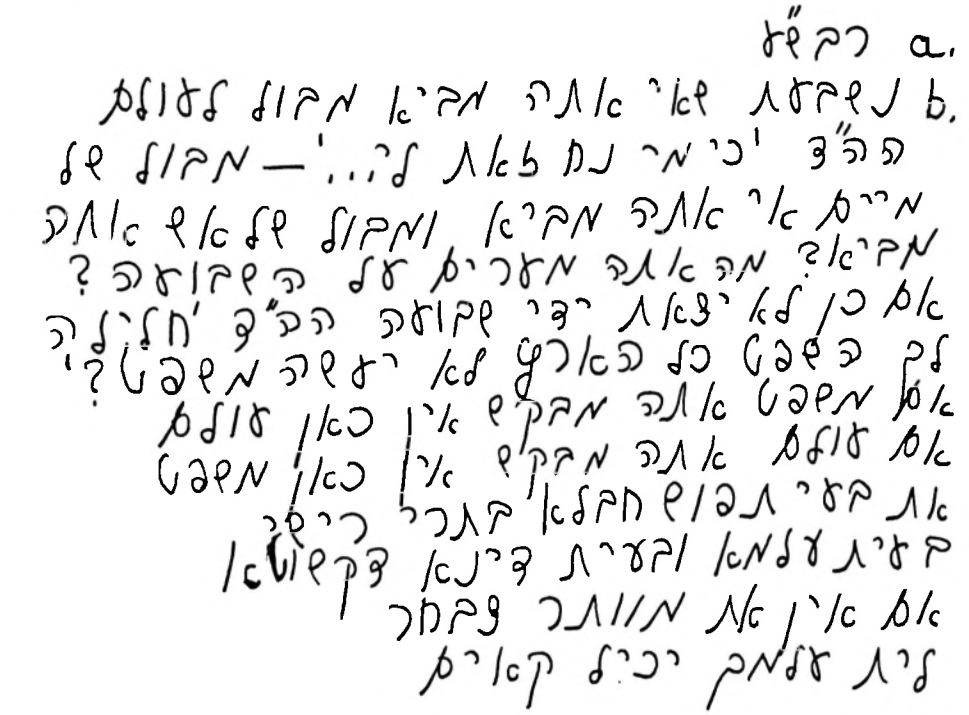
We saw earlier that private rabbinic prayers using the courtroom pattern often set forth in the plea a promise made by God as grounds for granting the petition. Thus did Sarah in her distress when she prayed while trapped in the chamber of Abimelech:



a. Lord of all worlds!
b. Abraham went forth (from his land) on your promises, and I went forth in faith. Now Abraham is out of prison while I am within this prison.[8]

And Abraham, in the classific situation of man appearing as a defense

attorney before the Supreme Judge, recalls God's promises and his attributes, pointing them out to the deity in his prayer that Sodom might be spared:



a. Master of the Universe!

b. You swore that You would not bring a flood upon the world, as it is written: 'For this is as the waters of Noah unto Me; for I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth. (Isaiah 54:9).' Is it just a flood of water that You will not bring, but a deluge of fire You will bring? Why will You with subtlety evade the oath? If so You will not have fulfilled the oath. As it is written: 'let it be far from You; shall not the Judge of all the earth do justly (Gen. 18:25)?' If You seek (absolute) justice, there can be no world here. If it is a world You seek here, there can be no (absolute) justice. You would grab a rope by both its ends: You would have a world and You would have absolute justice. But if You will not be a little indulgent Your world cannot endure. [9]

Surely here Abraham is a lawyer at his best. Before the Supreme Judge, Abraham quotes God's solemn promise. He argues that God

cannot really evade his oath on a mere technicality with a subtle trick. No, the Judge of all the earth is bound to the rules of justice. And, finally, Abraham enters a plea that the Judge take judicial notice of the facts -- the practical aspect of the case. The standard of absolute justice, Abraham argues, is impossible (hence bad law). The petition for mercy in this prayer, as in Sarah's, is, of course, implicit in the plea.

Jacob, too, quotes the Torah to God as he pleads his case in the prayer he utters before his going out to meet Esau:

a. רבש"ע
b. כתבת תורתך: 'שור ושה אתו ואת בנו
לא תשחטו ביום אחד' אתא רשע זה
והרג אמ ובנים - סבר
תורה שאתה עתיד ליתן על הר סיני
מי יקרינה
c. הצילני נא מיד - הצילני נא מיד
שפלי רבש"ע ורחמי אמ על בנים
שנאמר: הצילני נא

a. Master of the World!
b. You wrote in Your Torah: 'Whether it be ox or sheep, it and its offspring You shall not kill on the same day (Lev. 22:28).' If this wicked man comes and kills my children and their mother at one time, that Torah -- which You will give on Mount Sinai -- who will read it?
c. Please save me from his hand that he not come and smite me -- mother with children -- as it is written: 'O save me.'[10]

The plea in Jacob's prayer adds yet another element to the argumentation. To understand that element, one must bear in mind the rabbinic principle of exegesis that, " תורה אומרת כלשון בני אדם

there is no chronology in Torah." Thus Jacob reminds God of his plan to give the Torah to the Children of Israel. On the basis of that divine plan, Jacob then petitions God to protect both him and his family from Esau -- so that his descendants might survive to receive the Torah. Structurally, this prayer also employs a Biblical quotation in the petition (c), a pattern which we had previously observed among the private rabbinic prayers of courtroom model. We observe here, too, another formula for introducing the petition which is used in several of the prayers of this type. Instead of the customary יהי רצון, we find the request introduced by the words "בבקשה ממך, please (from You)."

In yet another variation of the plea section (b), God's words are quoted in several prayers as justification of the intercession of a Biblical character with God on Israel's behalf. Thus Moses prayed when God sought to destroy Israel in the wilderness:

a. רבש"ע
b. בבקשה מלפניך מה אתה מכלה את
עמך את ישראל אתה אמרת לי
עתה אין השלמת! עכשו כך אמרת לי
תמרה: תקו' מתפללו ואומרת: ערוכה
את בארך מתוק
c. עכשיו תהי מתוקין שם ישראל
ורפאם עתה

a. Master of the Universe!
b. You intend to destroy Israel! You are wiping them out of the world! But did You not promise me at Marah -- 'pray, saying: Make the bitter sweet?'
c. So now, too, make Israel's bitterness sweet and heal them.[11]

The faithfulness of Abraham in the binding of Issac is invoked by Abraham as precedent to justify God's favoring Israel in its future trials. Thus does Abraham intercede in Israel's behalf:

a. רבון כל העולמים
b. גלוי וידוע לפניך שבשעה שאמרת לי
קח נא את בנך את יחידך אשר אהבת את יצחק
ואלך לארץ המוריה והעלהו שם לעולה על אחד
ההרים אשר אומר אליך, והיה כשיבואו בניו
של יצחק לידי צרה, ואין להם על מי להשען
ולהתחנן לפניך אלא עליך, ואתה תזכור להם
היום הזה ותהא מתמלא עליהם רחמים
ותושיעם.
c. יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהי שכשיבואו
בני יצחק בניי לידי צרה ואין להם
מי שיעמוד בעדם ויזכרו להם
עקידת יצחק אביהם ותתמלא עליהם
רחמים

a. Lord of all Worlds!
b. It is revealed and known to You that when You told me to offer Isaac my son, there was something I could have answered before You: Yesterday you said to me 'For in Issac shall seed be called to you (Gen. 21:12)' and now you say 'offer him there as a sacrifice.' Heaven forfend, I did not do so, but I conquered my inclination and did Your will.
c. Thus may it be Your will, O Lord my God, that whenever the children of Isaac, my children, enter into sorrow and their is no one to plead their defense, You plead their defense. 'The Lord will see' -- You shall remember for them the binding of Isaac their father and be filled with compassion for them. [12]

The prayer of Esther employs an interesting argument to justify Esther's petition that God save her and the Jews from the plot of Haman. For she argues that God's reputation is at stake. Quoting a verse from the Psalms, Esther insists that God's being enthroned upon the praises of Israel requires Israel's continued existence. Thus, she argues, unless Israel be spared, God's reputation would suffer. Unless Israel survives, the words of Scripture would be a lie:

ב. אם לא תענו לנו הם יאבדונו ואיך יאמר
קדוש ... יושב תהלות ישראל ואם תושיענו
אנו מודיעים שמך ומפרסמים תהלתך ונמצא
אמת נאמר ישראל ישועת עולמים ה' ועל
הנסים ועל הנפלאות ועל הטובות שעשית
לאבותינו ולנו

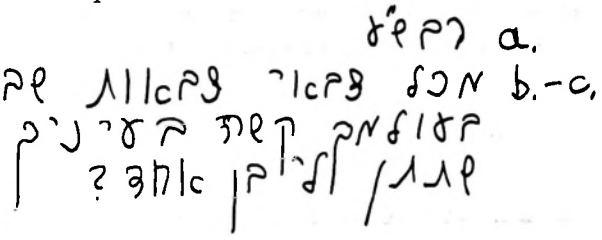
b. If You do not answer us, they will destroy us. Then how can it be said (truthfully) that You are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel (Psalm 22:4)? But if You save us, then through us (the truth of) 'You are holy... enthroned upon the praises of Israel' is established.[13]

Hannah, in extreme despair over her barreness, goes so far as to threaten the Supreme Judge:

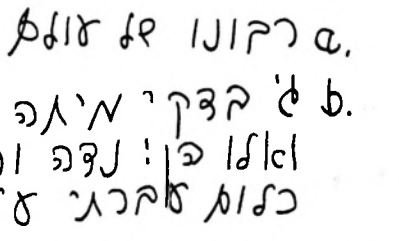
א. ותתפלל על ה' ועלי בכתה תבכה
ב. ולא תאכל עוד ולא תשתה עוד ולא יעלה
תער על ראשי כי נזיר אלקנה אני

a. Master of the Universe!
b. If You will look, it is good. But if not, I will go and shut myself up with someone else before Elkanah my husband, (so he'll be jealous and test me) and because I have been alone they will force me to drink the water of the suspected wife, and You cannot falsify Your law which says: 'She shall be cleared and shall conceive seed (Num. 5:28).'[14]

The rhetorical question as part of the plea, a device which we observed previously in rabbinic prayer of courtroom origin, is also used in several of the prayers placed in the mouth of Biblical personalities. Two of Hannah's rhetorical questions:



a. Master of the Universe!
b-c. From all the hosts of hosts which You created, would it be so difficult in your eyes to give me one son?



a. Master of the Universe!
b. Three criteria for death... You have created for women, and these are they: niddah, hallah, and the kindling of the (Sabbath) light. Have I transgressed any of them?[15]

In another variation of plea of courtroom style prayer placed in the mouth of Biblical figures, we find not insolence or presumption in the argumentation, but, its opposite -- a plea which throws the petition on the mercy of the court. Thus Moses prays that he may be allowed

to enter the land of Israel:

a. רש"י
b. כל כך למה? והלא כבר נאמר: וחנותי את אשר אחון ורחמתי את אשר ארחם! אלא כך אמר משה לפני הקב"ה: רבונו של עולם, גלוי וידוע לפניך שאין לי על ישראל שום זכות
c. אלא מתנת חנם עשה עמי.

a. Master of the Universe!
b. Have You not said to me: 'Anyone who has no claim upon Me, to him I will be gracious. (ie) I will grant (his prayer) freely (on the basis of grace not merit).' Now I do not claim that there is anything due to me from You,
c. but grant me (my prayer) as an act of grace. [16]

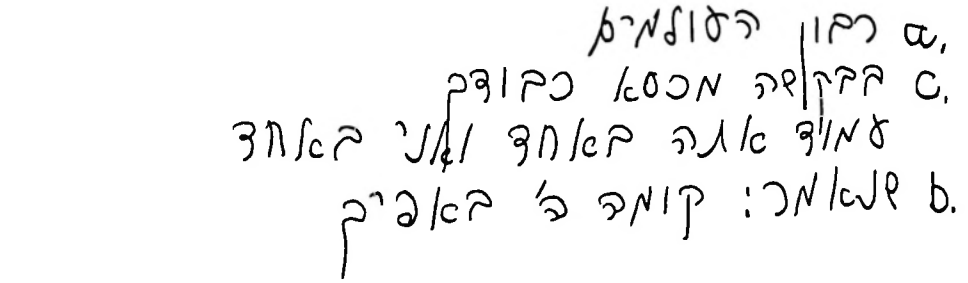
By contrast, a kind of Promethian theme appears in a few of the prayers of Moses, especially when he intercedes for Israel after the Golden Calf, pleading with God not to destroy them. In several prayers (Ber. 32a) Moses, to plead his case, offers Biblical quotes, stands on his personal faithfulness, appeals to God's sense of justice. But, finally, failing to obtain an affirmative response, Moses is said to have taken hold of the Holy One Blessed Be He like a man seizes the garment of a friend. He prays, forcing God to forgive:

a. רש"י
b. אלא אומר אני לא אניח ממך עד שתמחול להם

a. Master of the Universe,
b. I will not let You go until You forgive them. [17]

Further, Moses is pictured as wresting the Torah away from hostile

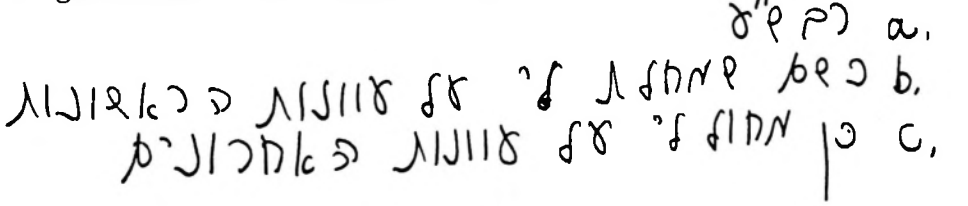
angels. In his descent from Sinai, Moses appeals to God to be his partner in the struggle with the heavenly hosts:



a. Lord of all Worlds!
c. I beg of Your glorious throne, You attack one while I handle the other: as it is written: 'Arise O Lord against your Af (Psalm 7:7).[18]

In the prayer, the rabbis interpret " , Your anger, " as meaning God's or , a ministering angel of the heavenly host. As contrasted with the first prayer showing a Promethian theme, the anthropomorphism in this prayer is reduced slightly by the address of the petition to the "throne of God" rather than to God himself. The Promethian element which we find so strong in these two prayers -- uttered in great extremity -- is not typical of the other prayers of the category, even though some, as the prayers of Hannah, do border on the presumptuous.

We also find prayers of confession attributed to Biblical characters. David appeals to God for pardon, relying on the precedent of God's prior forgiveness. This confession prayer uses the courtroom pattern:



a. Master of the Universe!
b. Just as You forgave me for my previous sins,
c. So forgive me for my later sins.[19]

One of the functions of these prayers attributed to Biblical personalities is their use as a means for interpretation or explication of a Biblical verse. The rabbis interpret the verse in terms of a prayer uttered by a Biblical figure. Such prayers may follow the courtroom style, and several of the prayers which we have previously considered, for example the prayers of Leah and Esther,[20] are occasioned by the need to interpret Biblical verses. Other prayers used for explication of Scriptural verses are simple, brief, straightforward prayers of petition.

The brief prayer of petition is the prayer attributed to David which serves as Rabbi Isaac's explanation of the verse: " תְּפִלָּה לְדָוִד הַטֵּה יְיָ אָזְנְךָ עֲנֵנִי , Consider the prayer of the destitute (Psalm 102:17)." The verse, according to Rabbi Isaac, refers to the people of this generation which has neither king nor prophet, neither priest nor urim and thummim to intercede for it. This generation has only prayer; therefore, with this verse, David intercedes for them saying before God:

רבש"ע יְיָ אַל תִּבְזֶה תְּפִלָּתָם

Master of the Universe! do not despise their prayers.[21]

So, too, the comment on " וְאֶשְׁכְּנָה בְּאָהֳלְךָ עוֹלָמִים, I will dwell in Your tent forever (Psalm 61:5)" occasions a prayer placed in David's mouth. Could it be, the Midrash asks, that David

thought he'd live forever? No, in fact David was saying to God:

יהי רצון מלפניך שיהיו שירותי
ותשבחותי שאני אומר לפניך בבתי כנסיות
ובבתי מדרשות של עמך

May it be Your will that my songs and praises shall be sung in synagogues and study-houses forever.[22]

And prayer placed in the mouth of Jacob is used to explain the verse " רוח תשימו בין עדר לעדר , put a space between drove and drove (Gen. 32:16, 17)." Thus prayed Jacob:

כי"ת
רבון העולמים אם יבואו צרות על בני אל תביאם
אחת על גבי אחת אלא הפסק ביניהם
והנח מקום

Master of the Universe! If troubles come upon my children, don't bring them one upon the other but let them have a breathing space between their troubles.[23]

We have surveyed the structure of the prayers which the rabbis placed into the mouths of Biblical figures. We now turn to make general comments on the content of these prayers. In contrast to the petitionary prayer of the rabbis, which tends to blend various themes into one prayer, the prayers attributed to Biblical personalities tend to concentrate upon one theme or petition in each prayer. There is little multiplicity of petition and less variety of items petitioned within this category of prayers than in rabbinic private prayer in general. A survey of this category as a whole allows for certain generalizations about the prayers attributed to Biblical characters. Of the 54 texts of such prayer we have

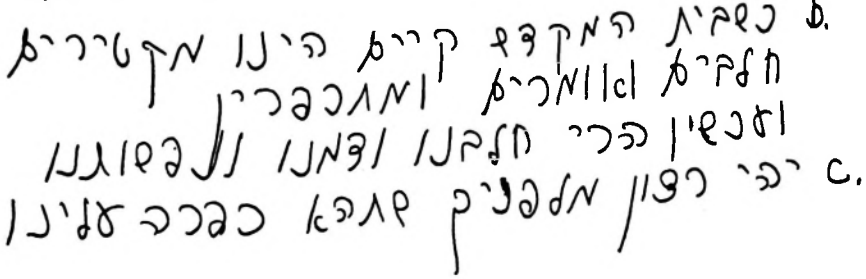
considered, the most frequent theme is intercession in behalf of Israel. Fifteen prayers are constructed with Biblical hereos pleading before God in Israel's behalf, petitioning the deity to hear their prayer, to save them, to spare them, to grant them mercy. Seven of the prayers have the Biblical character praying to be forgiven by God; the bulk of these prayers are in the mouth of David. Moses prays in no less than seven of the prayers that he may be allowed to enter into the land of Israel. Two prayers are offered praising God for giving the Torah; two are petitions for general good. Hannah offers four of the five prayers where God is petitioned regarding the birth of a son. There are seven prayers, like the prayer of Leah, where the Biblical character prays for deliverance from his enemy. We find three prayers dealing with the theme of health: two are offered by the Egyptian midwives for the health of Israelite children; the third is Hezekiah's prayer that he himself, be healed. The remaining prayers deal with single subjects or specific occurrences like the binding of Isaac, the intercession for Sodom, the appointment of leaders to succeed Moses.

We have already demonstrated how the prayers which the rabbis placed in the mouth of Biblical personalities exhibit the characteristics of rabbinic private prayer in general. They employ the courtroom pattern with greatest frequency. They are also similar in content, to a large extent, to the other private prayers, petitioning such usually prayed for items as health, forgiveness, mercy, deliverance from the enemy, and elements of the general good. The chief difference in content

between that of the private prayer of the rabbis and that of the prayer placed into the mouth of Biblical figures is that the content in each prayer of the latter category as a whole is more greatly limited. There is a narrower range of themes in the Biblical prayers and less diverity of petition.

The differences of content, too, are conditioned by the particular setting of such prayers, to wit: the Biblical narrative. But the differences are less substantive than quantitative.

The similarity of these two prayer categories is highlighted by an examination of several prayers attributed by the rabbis to Biblical personalities which closely paralled certain rabbinic private prayers. The prayer of Israel, given by R. Simon, closely parallels the prayer of Rav Sheshet. The wording is similar; the petition in both prayers is for atonement, with personal fasting substituted for animal sacrifice. First the prayer of Israel:



b. When the Temple existed we used to burn fat and certain portions of the sacrifice, thus obtaining atonement. Now (we can only offer) our own fat and our own blood and souls.
c. May it be Your will that they atone for us.[24]

And the prayer of Rav Sheshet:

a. Master of the Universe!
b. It is revealed and known to You that when the Temple existed, a man would sin and offer a sacrifice. But only the fat and blood were offered from it. And it would atone for him. Now I have set in a fast and my fat and my blood are reduced --
c. May it be Your will that my fat and my blood, which are diminished, be as if I had sacrificed it before You on the altar and accept me.[25]

A prayer of Solomon, though different in words, maintains the spirit of the phrase " הטוב בעיניך עשה, do that which is good in your eyes" of Rabbi Eliezer's brief tefillah in time of danger.[26] Thus Solomon prayed:

a. Lord of the World!

c-b. If there be a man who prays before You that You give him money, and You know that it would be bad for him -- do not give it to him. But if You see a man for whom wealth would be well -- grant it to him, as it is written: "And give to every man according to his ways, whose heart you know (II Chronicles 6:30).[27]

The prayer of Abraham after the akedah is another example of intercessory prayer. Abraham prays that, when trouble comes upon Israel in the future, God should remember the binding of Isaac and be stirred to:

עמוד מכסא הדין לכסא רחמים
ורגש עליהם רחמים ורחם עליהם
והפוך להם מדת הדין למדת
הרחמים

Stand from the seat of justice to the seat of mercy and be filled with compassion for them, and have mercy upon them, and turn from the attribute of justice to the attribute of mercy.[28]

This prayer parallels directly the prayer offered in the sanctuary by Rabbi Ishmael b. Elisha, the priest:

יהי רצון מלפניך יכבשו רחמיך את כעסך
וישלו רחמיך על מדותיך ותתגלגל עם
מדותיך הרחמים ותכנס להם לפנים
משורת הדין

May it be (Your) will that Your mercy conquer Your anger and let Your mercy prevail over Your (other) attributes. And deal with Your children in mercy, and stop short of strict justice.[29]

Indeed, according to Rav, God himself prays that his mercy might

conquer his other attributes and that he may deal with his children according to the attribute of mercy rather than strict justice.[30]

The practice of placing words of prayer or exhortation in the mouth of heroes of antiquity is a practice which is not peculiar to the rabbis. It was an accepted mode of historical writing in the Hellenistic world. The practice was employed by Thucydides and Josephus. The stirring speech by Eliezer b. Yair at Massada[31] is an example of such a speech composed by an historian and placed into the mouth of a hero. And this same practice was followed by the authors of the Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphic literature. In that literature, in such books as Tobit, Maccabees, Enoch, the Assumption of Moses, and the Additions to Esther, we find that this same practice is followed. While we shall not delve deeply into the nature and content of the prayers which are placed into the mouths of characters of this literature, a few comments upon them are in order.

Though the practice of this literature in placing prayers into the mouth of famous persons was employed by the rabbis, the prayers which the rabbis placed in the mouth of Biblical personalities are dissimilar to those found in the Apocraphyal books. The rabbis put rabbinic prayer into the mouth of Bible personalities; Apocryphal prayers display a very different literary style.

We shall examine two texts, one from the Apocrypha, the prayer of Jonathan from II Maccabees, and one from the Pseudepigrapha, a prayer of Enoch. First the prayer of Jonathan:

a. יי יי

b. אל בורא כל דברים אשר אתה נורא וחזק וצדיק ורחום
אשר אתה לבדך מלך וחנון אשר אתה לבדך מפרנס לכל
צורך אשר אתה לבדך צדיק וקדוש אשר אתה לבדך
גבור ונצחי אשר אתה לבדך מציל את כל מצרותיו
אשר אתה לבדך בחרת באבותינו וקדשתם

d. קבל זבח זה בעד כל עמך ישראל ושמור חלקך וקדשהו
קבץ נפוצותינו הצל לעבדים בגוים הבט אל נמאסים
ונתעבים ויידעו הגוים כי אתה אלהינו הענה לרודפינו
וגדפינו בגאון והתל בהם בגאון הנטע את עמך במקום
קדשך כאשר אמר משה

a. O Lord, O Lord,

b. the God, creator of all things, who art terrible and strong and righteous and merciful, who alone art king, and gracious, who alone suppliest every need, who alone art righteous and almighty and eternal, You who savest Israwl out of all evil, who made the fathers, Your elect, and sanctified them:

d. Accept this sacrifice for all Your people Israel, guard Your own portion, and consecrate it. Gather together our dispersion, set at liberty them that are in bondage among the heathen, look upon them that are despised and abhorred, and let the heathen know that You are our God. Torment them that oppress us and in arrogance treat us shamefully. Plant Your people in your holy place as Moses said. [32]

Next we have prayer of Enoch:

b. Blessed be You, O Lord, King, great and mighty in Your greatness, Lord of the whole creation of the heaven, King of Kings and God of the whole world. And Your power and kingship and greatness abide forever and ever, and throughout all generations Your dominion; and all the heavens are Your throne forever and the whole earth Your footstool forever and ever. For You have made and You rule all things, and nothing is too hard for You. Wisdom departs not from the place of Your throne, nor turns away from Your presence. And You know and see and hear everything, and there is nothing hidden from You.

c. And now the angels of Your heaven are guilty of trespass, and upon the flesh of man abides Your wrath until the great day of judgment.
a. And now O God and Lord and Great King,
d. I implore and beseech You to fulfill my prayer, to leave me a posterity on earth, and not destroy all the flesh of man and make the earth desolation, so that there should be an eternal destruction. And now, my Lord, destroy from the earth the flesh which has aroused Your wrath, but the flesh of righteous and uprightness establish as a plant of the eternal seed, and hide not Your face from the prayer of Your servant, O Lord.[33]

These prayers are vastly different from rabbinic prayer. They are much longer and far more elaborate than the prayers of the rabbis, lacking the simplicity of thought and language which characterize rabbinic prayer. The multiplication of the praises of God which we see in these two prayers is absent from rabbinic prayer, both private and that which is placed in the mouth of Biblical personalities. Nor does such extravagant praise of God appear in rabbinic public worship. Even the Bet Ha Midrash prayer, which often employs a group of similar or synonymous words in praise patterns, has no such elaborate delineation of the attributes and qualities of God (which, here in any case, is not confined to third person forms). Indeed, the rabbis openly discouraged the multiplication of praises of God in prayer.[34] Further, the standard כנוסח, rabbinic appellations for God are missing from these two prayers. Instead the terms כל and אלקים are used; the prayer of Enoch even begins with ברוך אתה כל, Blessed are You, a formula which the rabbis reserved for a liturgical blessing.

In his discussion of the rabbinic prayer using the courtroom form, Dr. Heinemann also refers to another prayer pattern, the pattern of petition of a slave before a master, or a subject before a king. This form of prayer is found frequently in prayer texts of various religions of the ancient Near East and is also seen in many of the Psalms. The structure of this kind of prayer appears similar to the courtroom pattern of rabbinic prayer, but it is, in fact, vastly different. The slave/master or subject/king pattern opens with an address to God (a), and it includes a description of his power and glory (b), usually in elaborate, even flattering language. The pattern continues with a presentation of the particular problem (c), turns to the petition (d) and often concludes with words of thanks (e). Heinemann observes, and our research bears out his contention, that this form of prayer is completely absent from the private prayers of the rabbis.[35]

In my judgment, these apocryphal prayers fit generally into the category of the slave/master or subject/king pattern. Where the rabbinic prayers open simply with brief addresses acknowledging God as "Master of the Universe" or "Lord of all Worlds," the prayers of Ecoch and Jonathan open with lengthy and exalted praises of God and descriptions of his glory, might and power. Such a [illegible], description of God's glory, is absent from our rabbinic prayers. Further, the request is offered without justification. This, indeed, is the key difference between these two patterns which appear structurally similar. The note of complaint, argumentation, justification which

characterizes the courtroom pattern is absent from the slave/master or subject/king pattern. The petitions of Jonathan and Enoch are offered as a slave or subject would petition his master or ruler for a gift, a grant, an award (largesse). The prayer of Jonathan does not describe the particular problem situation (c) which prompts the prayer, but this is implicit in the prayer itself and the situation of the Hasmonean revolt which is portrayed in the Book of the Maccabees. In Enoch's prayer, the coming day of judgment is the particular distress (c) which occasions the supplication. Neither prayer includes a section of thanksgiving (e), but this omission is logical as within the text we have no suggestion that the prayer has, as yet, been answered.

We see, then, upon examination of rabbinic prayers placed in the mouth of Biblical personalities that the rabbis, although they employed the same technique of the Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphic literature in placing words into the mouths of heroes of the past, do not use the same patterns as in those prayers. Such prayers are radically different in style from rabbinic prayer, and fit the slave/master or subject/ruler pattern, a form which is totally absent from rabbinic private prayer. In summary, we can say that the rabbis placed in the mouth of Biblical personalities prayers which they themselves might pray, prayers which were similar in content and structure and style to the rest of their private prayer expression.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

Our study of the private prayers of the rabbis has disclosed to us a vast treasure of religious expression which, largely, has remained outside the siddur, the liturgy which has been passed down through the ages. The personal prayers of the rabbis, however, deserve a respected place in the attention of those who study and who write liturgy, however, For the private prayers give us valuable insights into the rabbis' prayer activity.

The private prayers unveil to us a broad spectrum of petition and confession and thanksgiving of rabbinic prayer which existed beyond the restricted realm of the statutory worship. They show us a variety of prayer forms which the rabbis used to express their prayers.

Comparing the statutory and private prayers, we see clearly that the rabbis strictly limited the forms and content of the statutory liturgy. Indeed, they guarded carefully the berakhah formula which they decreed to be reserved for statutory worship. The berakhah, of course, is the hallmark of the fixed worship of the siddur.

We have seen in private prayer some prayers which are similar to the berakhah in function -- the expression of praise, thanksgiving, or petition to God. But generally the private prayers display unique patterns of their own. Such formulas as the "
formula, the and patterns, the courtroom prayer model, the Bet Ha Midrash prayer style -- all these patterns are unique to the private prayers of the rabbis.

Though the patterns differ distinctly between the statutory and

the private prayers, we do find that there existed in Israel a kind of prayer vocabulary which was common to the rabbis. This prayer vocabulary they used freely; they used the same words and phrases in both the statutory and private prayers. Among the private prayers, the same phrases and words are used by different rabbis in their personal prayers. Examining some of the specific aspects of this prayer vocabulary, we find the following phrases among those which are common to both mandatory and private worship:

ברחמים הרבים	in Your great mercy
אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו	Our God and God of our fathers
לב שלם	a perfect heart
יחד לבבנו	unify our hearts
לעשות תשובה	to do repentance
ליראה שמך	to fear Your Name
אהבת תורה	love of Torah
לעשות רצונך	to do Your will
סלח, מחל, כפר	forgive, pardon, atone

In private prayer, further, there are various expressions which become, to some extent, stylized. These customary expressions are familiar to the rabbis, and are part of the prayer vocabulary which they draw upon in composing their personal prayer expressions. Among such phrases are these:

מותי יהא כפרה	May my death be my atonement
לא לכבודי עשיתי	not for my glory have I acted
רעות המתרגשות	evils which are stirred up
בושה וכלימה	shame and disgrace
מדת טובה	good attribute
חלוה שבעיסה	leaven in the dough
כף כל צורר וארב	the hand of every enemy or ambusher
ברכה למעשה ידינו	blessing to the work of our hands

We note one particular word, "חלק," which has extended use in both the statutory liturgy and in the private prayers. " חלק, portion," is a term which is flexible and is used in a variety of prayers: " חלק טוב, good portion;" " תן חלקנו בתורתך, grant our portion in Your Torah;" " שים חלקנו בגן עדן, place our portion in Paradise, and others. The term " חלק" expresses the hope that the lot in life of the petitioner will include that which modifies the term " חלק."

We observed when we considered the development of the statutory prayer that it contains the essential themes of Jewish religious thought. The mandatory liturgy of public worship indeed expresses the basic religious affirmations of Judaism in the blessings which affirm God as Creator, Revealer, and Redeemer. The public worship of Israel expresses the Jew's wonder at the creation, at the daily miracles which surround him in all aspects of life; it expresses the thanks the Jew feels

toward God for the many manifestations of the divine bounty and for the heritage which his ancestors have bequeathed to him. And the petitions of the tefillah do indeed express the most basic of human needs and Jewish hopes. Yet the statutory liturgy is not just response in prayer; it, I think, has didactic purpose. The statutory worship of Israel teaches the Jew how to pray, for what to pray. It teaches religious experience and expression as well as it reflects such experience and expression.

The private prayer of the rabbis goes beyond the statutory worship. It indeed covers many of the same themes and hopes expressed in the mandatory prayers, but, since these are basic themes, we are not surprised to find them repeated by the rabbis in their personal devotions. But these basic themes are amplified in private prayer; they are expanded; they are expressed in new, and intimately personal ways. The private prayer of the rabbis shows how the rabbis forged for themselves a personal link to the traditional content of the liturgy by expressing that content in their unique personal prayers. And further, the private prayers introduce into Jewish prayer expression, themes, ideas, hopes, nuances which are not in the statutory prayers. The private prayers are more spontaneous, less didactic. We find in them a realistic picture of the needs and wants of individuals. Many of the petitions expressed in private prayer are lofty, exalted. Others are very personal, very specific, and very much tied to the daily life of the rabbis who express them.

Freehof errs when he tries to force private prayer into the mold of the tefillah; Liebreich errs when he tries to impose the berakhah pattern on prayers which were not part of the fixed worship to which that pattern was restricted. The Bet Ha Midrash prayers provide ample evidence that the themes of the statutory liturgy were amplified and expanded in private prayer. True enough, the themes of Torah, chosenness, and hope for redemption were fixed -- but not in the liturgy so much as in the minds of the people. These themes in private prayer are expressed in various ways and permutations which were impossible in fixed prayer. The לחשות prayers of the rabbis add petitionary elements which the fixed liturgy, if only because of time limitation, could not include. And the themes of private prayer which are common to statutory worship are expressed in patterns which are uniquely characteristic to private prayer categories.

The development of the liturgy of Judaism did not cease with the codification of the statutory prayer. The statutory prayer became the core of the siddur, but there were subsequent developments in the codification of the liturgical elements which we now find in our siddur. The private prayers of the rabbis had a major role in that subsequent development of the siddur. There are two tendencies which we find present in this later development. On the one hand there is a tendency to make what had been optional, required, what was private, public. And, at the same time, there is a tendency to add additional themes, expressions, and shades of meaning to the public worship by adding new elements to

the required worship. Rabbinic private prayer is an important influence in both tendencies. For example, many of the prayers which were originally optional and/or privately recited prayers, such as those in Berakhot 60b, became part of the siddur and assumed a required status as part of the birkhot ha-shaḥar.[1] Such prayers as אלהי נצור, which were originally personal, are placed into the siddur where they assume a kind of residual public, required character.[2] The Torah blessing given in the Talmud, Berakhot 11b, as an alternative Torah blessing, becomes a fixed element in the birkhot ha shahar.[3]

The private prayers of the rabbis provided later liturgists with texts which they could incorporate into the siddur for adding new themes and ideas. Attached to the tefillah, was the יהי רצון prayer of Mar b. Rabina. This prayer for humility and for divine blessing and protection was deemed a particularly fitting close to the tefillah, and this originally private prayer assumed a residual statutory status. It is now recited after the tefillah, almost as part of the tefillah itself.[4]

Two prayers among the petitionary prayers of the rabbis became part of the birkhot ha shahar. The יהי רצון prayer of Judah Ha Nasi[5] and the confession of R. Jochanan are now in the siddur as part of the morning blessings.[6] The prayer of Rav Sheshet, which he offered in a fast, has become part of the siddur as the prayer for an individual who is observing a private fast.[7]

We have previously observed how the prayers of Bet Ha Midrash origin were incorporated into the public liturgy of the siddur. The

prayer, the prayer, the Kaddish, and elements of the Torah service are prayers whose origin is in the Bet Ha Midrash, but which were later added to the siddur.

The private prayers of the rabbis were, in some instances, incorporated into newly composed prayers. This influence is seen in two prayers: the prayer, a prayer for Sabbath and festivals, incorporates part of the prayer of thanksgiving for rain ascribed to R. Jochanan.[9] And the Ashkenazi version of the , the blessing for the new month, incorporates the prayer of Rav.[10]

Aside from the direct influence of the private prayers whereby various private prayers of the rabbis recorded in the Talmud became included into the siddur, the rabbinic private prayers exerted an indirect influence upon Jewish liturgical development. There are a host of later prayers which employ the formula. The third person style of the prayer of Bet Ha Midrash origin was copied by later liturgists, and prayers of this pattern occur frequently in the siddur. The courtroom pattern of confession also influenced later liturgical development. Many of the confessions, as we have observed, were incorporated into the Yom Kippur tefillah. Other prayers, such as and and various forgiveness prayers are confession prayers which are composed on the courtroom confession model.[12] The recitation of the sh'ma at bedtime includes a prayer where there has been an interweaving of some of these

confession texts.[13]

We have not attempted a systematic survey of the incorporation of rabbinic private prayer into the liturgy, a process which began as early as the siddurim of Amram and Saadya. Nor have we attempted an exhaustive analysis of the influence of the forms which we have found in rabbinic private prayer upon the structure of later prayers. These we reserve for future study. But even our cursory glance at these few examples demonstrates that the realm of rabbinic private prayer had significant impact upon later liturgical development.

We turn, finally, to assess the relevance and importance of the private prayers of the rabbis to modern, liberal Jews. For us the tradition of private rabbinic prayer is important, for it serves as an irrefutable precedent for our own right to contemporary religious self-expression.

From our private prayer study, too, we gain perspective for our own creative approach to liturgy. We achieve insight into the rules of the Jewish liturgical game. For Jewish liturgy is not a chaotic process; there are rules and norms which have been followed, conventions and styles which have gained the sanctity of tradition. We who would write prayers and services can profit from a knowledge of the prayer tradition of the rabbis; we can appropriate from their prayers those texts which are meaningful to us, those texts which express in a different, yet traditional way some of the timeless themes of Jewish traditional prayer which we might wish to emphasize in a new or different way.

We can, by appropriating from the forms and patterns of rabbinic private prayer, enhance our own efforts at contemporary liturgical composition, using traditional language to express our contemporary petitions.

We have observed that the rabbis had a prayer vocabulary which they used freely in the composition of their prayers; we can draw upon that prayer vocabulary in the composition of our prayers. For it provides us with words and phrases which are clothed with the sanctity of tradition and filled with meanings and nuances which strike responsive chords in Jewish worshippers.

Finally, the study of the tradition of Jewish liturgy can help us learn how to pray; it can help us to express our religious feelings and experiences in authentic language of Jewish prayer expression. This, indeed, has been my own experience, which I make bold to set forth at this time.

The weeks of mid-May, 1970, during which I completed my work on this thesis, were chaotic, troubled, tragic weeks. An unpopular, senseless war was being waged in Viet Nam. When the President announced that American troops had invaded Cambodia, protest racked the nation, especially on the college campuses, where the youth of the country gathered to protest with vehemence this expansion of the war. In the course of such a protest four students at Kent State University, innocent bystanders to a demonstration against the war, were cut down and killed by National Guardsmen's bullets. A wave of shock and anger

swept through the country; the youth of the nation--and the students of the Hebrew Union College--were uniquely united in outrage at these tragic events. Many, myself included, sought to make some religious response to the event. My response came in a prayer expression which was composed spontaneously in the language of private rabbinic prayer of the courtroom pattern. Study had equipped me with a vocabulary, a style, a way of responding in prayer:

Master of the Universe! You have told us through Your prophet: "Your youth shall see visions." But now four of them lay slain.

Master of the Universe! You have told us through Your prophet: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares." But now the army of American attacks in Cambodia.

Master of the Universe! You have told us through Your prophet: "Nations shall not learn war anymore." But now our President is expanding the war.

Master of the Universe! "He who makes peace on high" You are called. Do not make Your words null and vain as dust. Appear in the splendor of Your might; be filled with compassion for Your children, for they are deep in sorrow.

Master of the Universe! Lord of peace! Pour out Your spirit upon us; enlighten our eyes and open our hearts. And give us peace; give us peace.

The private prayers of the rabbis are treasures of prayer expression. As our part of our liturgical heritage they are open for us to appropriate; they can help us learn to pray. כן יהי רצון,

Thus may it be His will.

FOOTNOTES

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

1. Ber. 26b.

2. Abraham J. Heschel, Man's Quest for God (New York: Scribners', 1954), p. 33.

CHAPTER II

1. I. Elbogen, Toldot ha-Tefillah v'ha-Avodah b' Yisrael (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1924), Part I; Joseph Heinemann, Prayer in the Period of the Tanna'im and the Ammora'im (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1964); A. Z. Idelshon, Jewish Liturgy and Its Development (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1932); K. Kohler, "The Origin and Composition of the Eighteen Benedictions, etc., HUCA I (1924), pp. 387 f.; Eliezer Levi, Y'sodot ha-Tefillah (Tel Aviv: Abraham Tzioni, 1963); Louis Finkelstein, "The Development of the Amidah," JQR, XVI (1925-6), pp. 1f., 127f. These are the best known treatments of the development of the statutory liturgy. The first two are the sources deemed best by this author.

2. Heinemann, pp. 17-28.

3. Meg. 18a.

4. Ber. 33a.

5. Sifre to Deuteronomy, quoted by Heinemann, p. 17.

6. Midrash on Psalms 17, quoted by Heinemann, p. 17.

7. Ber. 29b.

8. Idelsohn, p. 24.

9. Heinemann, p. 18.

10. Ibid. Note also Meg. 4:3, b. Meg. 23b.

11. Ibid. Note also Ber. 4:7.

12. Ibid., p. 29.

13. Ibid., p. 19.

14. Elbogen, p. 7-8.

15. Ibid.

16. Heinemann, p. 52f.

17. Ibid., p. 61. Note also, for example, Ber. 12a.

18. Elbogen, pp. 19, 23. Note also Ber. 11b.

19. Finkelstein, pp. 1f., 127f.

20. Heinemann, pp. 32-36, 48-51. Cf. Elbogen, p. 8-9.

21. J. Ber., Ch. 1, 3d.

22. Elbogen, p. 21.

23. Cf. Sotah 40a and J. Ber., Ch. 1, p. 3d.

24. B. Ber. 29b, and J. Ber., Ch. 4, p. 8a.

25. Pes. 17b, quoted by Heinemann, p. 37.

26. Heinemann, pp. 37-47.

27. Elbogen, p. 9-10.

28. Ibid., p. 25. See also Mishna Tamid 5:1.

29. Ibid., pp. 26-29. Cf. Heinemann, pp. 17-28, 138-157.

30. Elbogen, p. 26-29. See also R. H. 14:5.

31. Heinemann, pp. 28, 148.

32. Eugen Mittwoch, "Some Observations on the Language of the Prayers, the Benedictions, and the Mishna," Essays Presented to J. H. Hertz (London: Edward Goldston, 1942), pp. 325-330.

33. Heinemann, pp. 28, 140-156.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. J. Ber. Ch. 1, p. 3d.

37. B. Ber. 29b. See also Ber. 29a.

38. Heinemann, p. 111.

39. Ber. 31a. See also Tos. Ber. 3:6.

40. Howard Zyskind, The Origin and Significance of the Birkhoth Hanehenin (Cincinnati: Unpublished, 1968).

41. Solomon B. Freehof, "The Structure of the Birchos Hashachar," HUCA, XXIII (1950-51), Part 2, pp. 339-354.

42. B. Ber. 40b. See also J. Ber. Ch. 1, p. 3d., and J. Ber. Ch. 9, p. 12d., and Tos. Ber. 1:7, 9.

43. Heinemann, pp. 108-111.

CHAPTER III

1. Ned. 49b.

2. Tos. Ber. 7:6, Ber. 58a.

3. Gen. R. 63:10.

4. Ber. 40b.

5. Ex. R. 15:22.

6. J. Ned., end of Chapter 6, quoted in A. Hymann, Otzar Divre Ḥakhamim U'fitgamayhem (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1921), p. 166.

7. Ber. 40b.

8. Ber. 54b.

9. Yeb. 105b.

9a. Ber. 16b.

10. Ber. 60a.

11. Heinemann, pp. 114-115.

12. Ibid., pp. 115-116.

13. Tos. Ber. 7:16.

14. Yoma 87b.

15. Ta'anit 25b.

16. Ber. 29b-30a.

17. Cf. Ber. 28b, and J. Ber., Ch. 4, p. 11c.

18. Keth 104a.

19. Ber. 28b. See J. Ber., Ch. 4, p. 7d. Note also for example, the prayer quoted in the name of R. Tanhum for one who has a bad dream, J. Ber., Ch. 5, p. 9a.

20. Ber. 16b.

21. J. Ber. Ch. 7, p. 7d.

22. Ibid.

23. Sota 7:1.

24. Sota 33a, J. Sota, Ch. 7, 21b.

25. Shab. 12b.

26. T'anit 9b.

27. J. Ta'anit, Ch. 3, p. 66d.

28. See above, the discussion of the language of the statutory liturgy.

29. Solomon B. Freehof, Private Prayers in the Talmud (Cincinnati: Unpublished, 1922), p. 112-113. Hereinafter cited as Freehof--thesis.

30. Ber. 17a.

31. Freehof--thesis, pp. 113-117.

CHAPTER IV

1. Heinemann, pp. 9-11.

2. Sheldon Blank, Jeremiah, Man and Prophet (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1961), p. 105.

3. Ibid, pp. 112f. See also Heinemann, pp. 212f.

4. Heinemann, p. 122.

5. Ibid.

6. Keth. 104a.

7. Ta'anit 23b.

8. Ber. 17a. See prayer of R. Tanhuma, j. Ber., Ch. 4, p. 7d.

9. Ber. 17a.

10. B. M. 59b.

11. Gen. R. 33:4.

12. Cf. Num. R. 11:4 and Sota 39a.

13. Ta'anit 24b.

14. Avot d' Rabbi Natan 6. See also Ta'anit 20a.

15. Ibid.

16. Cf. j. Ber. Ch. 4, p. 7a, and Gen. R. 68:9. Note also the prayer recited upon leaving a city, b. Ber. 60b.

17. Tanna d'Be Eliahu, Part I, Chapter 30.

18. Ta'anit 25b.

19. Ta'anit 23a.

20. Ibid.

21. Yoma 53b.

22. Sota 36a-37a. Mechilta, [illegible]

23. Ber. 29b.

24. Ta'anit 23a. -24a.

25. Yoma 53b.

26. Ber. 60b. See Heinemann, p. 135.

27. Heinemann, pp. 123-124.

28. Avot d; Rabbi Natan 21. Note two versions of similar prayers ascribed to R. Nehumia, j. Ber. Ch. 4, p. 7d, and b. Ber. 28b.

29. Gen. R. 68:9. Note also j. Ber., Ch. 4, p. 7a.

30. Tos. Ber. 7:16. See also Ber. 60a. The prayer for recitation upon leaving the bath house, Tos. Ber. 7:17, is almost identical.

31. Heinemann, p. 123.

32. Ibid., pp. 123-124.

33. Yoma 48a.

34. J. Ber., Ch. 4, p. 7d.

35. B. Ber. 19a.

36. Lev. R. 3:3. Note similar confession in j. Yoma, Ch. 8., p. 45c.

37. Yoma, 87b.

38. L. Frumkin, Ed., Seder Rav Amram Ha-Shalem (Jerusalem: Zuckerman, 1912), p. 330. See also Davidson, et. al., eds. Siddur R. Saadja Gaon (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1941), p. 25, where the text is expanded.

39. Yoma 87b.

40. Israel Abrahams, "The Lost Confession of Samuel," HUCA, I (1924), pp. 381-382.

41. Ibid.

42. Frumkin, ed., pp. 95-96. Note also Arthur Marmorstein, "The Confession of Sins for the Day of Atonement," Essays Presented to J. H. Hertz (London: Edward Goldston, 1942), P. 295.

43. David de Sola Pool, ed., Book of Prayer (New York: Union of Sephardic Congreations, 1947), p. 8.

44. Heinemann, pp. 129-130. See also Max Kadushin, The Rabbinic Mind (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1952), pp. 341ff.

45. Marmarstein, pp. 295-296.

46. Freidmann, ed., Pesikta Rabbati, Chapter 35, 160b.

47. Y. Baer, Seder Avodat Yisrael (Tel Aviv: Schocken, 1933), p. 414.

48. Marmorstein, pp. 296f.

49. Heinemann, p. 135.

CHAPTER V

1. Num. R. 18:22

2. Deut. R. 2:22

3. Tanhuma, Ekev. 1.

4. Shab. 88a.

5. Seder Eliahu R. 23 (Freidmann, ed., p. 127).

6. Avot 5:20.

7. Derekh Eretz R., end, quoted in Heinemann, p. 162.

8. Joseph Heinemann, "Prayers of Beth Midrash Origin," Journal of Semitic Studies, Vol. V (1960), p. 267. Hereinafter cited as "Heinemann--article."

9. Avot 4:22.

10. Ber. 57b.

11. E. D. Goldschmidt, The Passover Haggadah (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1960), pp. 118, 38.

12. Middot 5:4.

13. Tanḥuma Noah, quoted in Heinemann--article, p. 268.

14. Derekh Eretz R., quoted in Heinemann, p. 162.

15. Heinemann, p. 165-170 and Heinemann--article, pp. 269-271.

16. Ibid.

17. Heinemann--article, p. 270.

18. Ibid., pp. 277f.

19. Baer, pp. 128-129.

20. Ibid.

21. Heinemann-article, pp. 273-274.

22. Leon J. Leibreich, "An Analysis of U-Ba' Le-Ziyyon in the Liturgy," HUCA, XXI (1948), pp. 176-209.

23. Frømkin, ed., p. 48 (Seder Rav Amram).

24. Leon J. Leibreich, "The Invocation to the Prayer at the Beginning of the Yozer Service," JQR (N.S.), Vol. 39 (1948-1949), pp. 285-290, 407-412.

25. Cf. Ibid., p. 285, and Heinemann--article, p. 269. See Pes. 10:5.

CHAPTER VI

1. Ber. 17a.

2. Ber. 16b-17a.

3. Ber. 16b.

4. Ibid.

5. Ber. 17a.

6. Ibid.

7. Ber. 16b.

8. J. Ber., Ch. 4, p. 7d, and b. Ber. 16b.

9. Ber. 16b.

10. Ibid.

11. J. Ber., Ch. 4, p. 7d.

12. Ibid.

13. Ber. 17a.

14. Ibid.

15. Ber. 60a. See also Tos. Ber. 7:16.

16. Ber. 60a. See also Tos. Ber. 7:17.

17. Ber. 28b, and J. Ber., Ch. 4, p. 7d.

18. Ber. 60a.

19. Ibid.

20. Shab. 12b.

21. Keth. 104a.

22. Keth. 8b.

23. Ber. 19a.

24. Num. R. 11:4. See also Yoma 55b and Sota 39a.

25. Ber. 60b.

26. J. Ber. Ch. 4, p. 7d.

27. Midrash Tannaim, Kee Tavo, to 26:3 (p. 172).

28. Lam. R. 2:2.

29. Ta'anit 23a, 23b, 24b, 25b.

30. J. Ber., Ch. 5, p. 9a.

31. B.K. 117a.

32. See for example Ta'anit 9b, Betza 38a.

33. Freehof–thesis, pp. 69f.

34. Ibid., pp. 36f.

35. Ber. 16b.

36. Ber. 16b. Compare prayer of Mar, Ber. 17a.

37. Ber. 60a.

38. Shab. 12b.

39. Ber. 17a.

40. Ber. 29b.

41. Yoma 53b.

42. J. Ber., Ch. 4, 7d.

43. Freehof--thesis, pp. 39f.

44. Gen. R. 13:2.

45. Ta'anit 20a, 23a, 23b, 24b, 25b.

46. Avot 3:17.

47. Ber. 16b-17a.

48. See Ber. 16b and Ber. 60a.

49. Ber. 16b and 17a.

50. J. Ber., Ch. 4, p. 7d, and b. Ber. 17a.

51. Freehof--thesis, pp. 42-52.

52. Ber. 16b.

53. Ibid.

54. Prayer of Rabba, Ber. 17a.

55. Prayer of Rav, Ber. 16b.

56. Lev. R. 3:3.

57. Ber. 60a.

58. Ber. 17a.

59. Ber. 16b.

60. J. Ber., Ch. 5, p. 8d, and b. Ber. 17a.

61. J. Ber., Ch. 4, p. 7d.

62. B. Ber. 17a.

63. Ber. 16b.

64. Sukkah 14a. This is a pun of the root נשׂא.

65. Ber. 7a.

66. Ibid.

67. For example, Ber. 16b and j. Ber., Ch. 4, p. 7d.

68. J. Ber., Ch. 4, p. 7d.

69. Ber. 16b, R. Eleazar.

70. Peah 1:1.

71. Avot 1:2.

72. Yeb. 74a.

73. Gen. R. 22:8, Ex. R. 22:3, Num. R. 12.

74. Bialik and Ravnitsky, Sefer Ha-Aggadah (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1960), p. 413, Sections 202, 203, and 204.

75. Ber. 16b.

76. Ber. 17a.

77. Temurah 16a.

78. Ber. 17a.

79. Freehof--thesis, pp. 62-64.

80. Ber. 28b.

81. Avot d'Rabbi Natan 21.

82. J. Ber., Ch. 4, p. 7d.

83. Ber. 16b.

84. Ber. 17a.

85. Ber. 16b-17a.

86. Ber., 28b.

87. J. Ber., Ch. 4, p. 7d.

88. Freehof--thesis, p. 61. Note Sifre, Ekev 45 (Friedmann, ed.) and Kid. 30b.

89. Ber. 5a-b.

90. J. Ber., Ch. 4, p. 4a.

91. Ber. 17a.

92. J. Ber., Ch. 4, p. 7d.

93. Yoma 53b.

94. Gen. R. 13:2.

95. Tanna De Be Eliahu, Part 1, Chapter 30.

96. J. Ber., Ch. 4, p. 7d.

97. Avot 5:23.

98. Ber. 17a.

99. Ber. 16b.

100. Ibid.

101. Max Kadusin, Worship and Ethics (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964).

CHAPTER VII

1. Ta'anit 34b.
2. Ber. 40b.
3. Ber. 54b.
4. Ber. 60b.
5. Ber. 60a.
6. Ibid.
7. Cf. Gen. R. 68:9 and j. Ber., Ch. 4. p. 7a.
8. Heinemann, pp. 123 f.
9. Ber. 59b.
10. Gen. R. 13:15. See also j. Ta'anit, Ch. 2, p. 64b.
11. Ibid.
12. Deut. R. 7:6.
13. Midrash on Psalms 18:16.
14. J. Ta'anit, Ch. 2, p. 64b.
15. See comments on the formal characteristics of Bet Ha Midrash prayer, Chapter V.

CHAPTER VIII

1. Judges 17:2.
2. I Samuel 15:13.
3. Genesis 14:19.
4. Numbers 6:24-26.
5. Heinemann, pp. 67-72, 168.
6. An exception among these texts is considered later.
7. J. Ber., Ch. 9, p. 13c.

8. Sopherim 14:6.

9. Sanh. 2:1.

10. Middoth 2:2. Three similar prayers are given here.

11. Keth. 8b.

12. Ber. 16b.

13. Shab. 12b.

14. Ibid.

15. Deut. R. 2:11.

16. Sanh. 106b.

17. Moed K. 9b.

18. Ber. 17a.

19. Ber. 28b.

20. Lev. R. 5:4, Deut. R. 4:8.

21. Yoma 53b.

22. Ta'anit 24a. R. Jose afterward cursed his son, however, for his son's troubling of the Creator.

23. Shab. 127b.

24. Niddah 33b, quoted by Hymann, p. 278.

25. A. Z. 52b.

26. Ta'anit 2:5, 6. Several parallel texts appear.

27. Betzah 28a.

28. Ber. 12a.

29. Shab. 46b.

30. Tos. Hag. 2:1.

31. Ber. 56a. See similar prayers in A. Z. 46a and Shab. 108a.

32. I Kings 8:15.

CHAPTER IX

1. Shab. 118b.
2. Baer, p. 188.
3. Ber. 28b.
4. Ber. 16b.
5. Shab. 118b.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. J. Moed K. Ch. 2, Halakha 3, quoted by Hymann, p. 279.
9. Shab. 118. b
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Shab. 118b-119a.
14. Shab. 118b.
15. Shab. 119a.

CHAPTER X

1. Deut. R. 11:6.
2. Tanhuma, end of Va-ethanan.
3. Gen. R. 70:16. 71:2.
4. Ber. 10b., given by R. Levi.
5. Ber. 31b.
6. Num. R. 21:2.

7. Ex. R. 1:15.

8. Gen. R. 52:13, given by R. Berekhya.

9. Lev. R. 10:1.

10. Gen. R. 75:13.

11. Ex. R. 43:3, Given in the name of R. Samuel b. Nachman. See also Deut. R. 2:11.

12. Cf. J. Ta'anit, Ch. 2, p. 65d, and Lev. R. 29:9. The prayer is given in the name of R. Jochanan, See also Lam. R., Petiḥtah 24.

13. Midrash on Psalms 22:19, given in the name of R. Ḥanina. See also Ber. 32a.

14. Ber. 31b.

15. Ibid.

16. Deut. R. 2:1, given by R. Levi. See also Deut. R. 2:7.

17. Ber. 32a.

18. Ex. R. 41:7.

19. Seder Eliahu Rabba (Friedmann, ed.), p. 7.

20. Midrash on Psalms 22:19, and Gen. R. 70:16, previously cited. Note also Num. R. 17:2 (Abraham), and Ex. R. 31:5 (Solomon).

21. Lev. R. 30:3.

22. Midrash on Psalms 61:3. See also Shab. 30a and Midrash on Psalms 17:2, 17:3.

23. Gen. R. 75:13.

24. Num. R. 18:21.

25. Ber. 17a.

26. Ber. 29b.

27. Ex. R. 31:5.

28. Lev. R. 29:9.

29. Ber. 7a.

30. Ibid., quoted by R. Zuta b. Tobi.

31. Josephus, Wars 7, 9.

32. II Maccabees 1:24-29. The Hebrew is from the translation into Hebrew of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha by Abraham Kahana, Ha-S'farim Ha-Hitzonim (Tel Aviv: Hozaath M'qoroth, 1936.).

33. I Enoch 84:2-6 (Hebrew translation).

34. Ber. 33b.

35. Heinemann, pp. 127-128. Heinemann suggests that the format of the tefillah as a whole is that of the slave/master pattern. He offers the Talmudic dicta on the structure of the tefillah as support for his claim: (1) the first three blessings and last three blessings--praise of God; the middle blessings-- the needs of his creatures (j. Ber. Ch1, p. 4d.), and (2) the first three--rememble a servant who sets forth praise before his master. The middle are like a servant who seeks a prize from his master; the final are like a servant who received a reward from his master and takes leave of him (Ber. 34a). I think Heinemann overstates the case here. He ignores the gradual development of the tefillah and that there was no apriori formal plan for it. It may be argued that the three part pattern was no more than a natural development. Clearly the dicta quoted are ex post facto. Thus I would conclude that, although the tefillah resembles the slave/master pattern, it was not consciously designed to fit this pattern. Furthermore the attempt to fit a whole rubric of prayers into the model which describes single prayers seems to me unwarranted.

CHAPTER XI

1. Freehof, Solomon, "The Origin and Structure of the Birchos Hashachar," HUCA, XXIII, Part 2 (1950-51), pp. 339-354. See also Baer, pp. 36-42.

2. Ber. 60b and Baer, p. 39.

3. Baer, p. 37.

4. Ber. 17a and Baer, p. 104

5. Ber. 16b and Baer, p. 43.

6. Yoma 87b and Baer, p. 44.

7. Ber. 17a and Baer, p. 105

8. Baer, pp. 131, 127, 75, 122-125. Note also Heinemann, pp. 158f., and Heinemann--article.

9. Ber. 59b and Baer, p. 206.

10. Ber. 16b and Baer, p. 232.

11. Yoma 87b and Baer, pp. 414f., 438.

12. Heinemann, pp. 134-135, and Baer, pp. 436-437.

13. Baer, p. 573.

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