

## Mishnah and its Intertexts

Read the first mishnah of Berakhot Chapter 6 and all the mishnayot of Berakhot Chapter 9, and try to answer the study questions at the end of this document.

### M Berakhot 6:1

פִּיצַד מְבָרְכִין עַל הַפְּרוֹת. עַל פְּרוֹת הָאֵילָן אוֹמֵר, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ, חוּץ מִן הַיַּיִן, שֶׁעַל הַיַּיִן אוֹמֵר בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן. וְעַל פְּרוֹת הָאָרֶץ אוֹמֵר בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה, חוּץ מִן הַפֶּת, שֶׁעַל הַפֶּת הוּא אוֹמֵר הַמוֹצֵיא לְחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ. וְעַל הַיִּרְקוֹת אוֹמֵר בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה. רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אוֹמֵר, בּוֹרֵא מִיַּיִן לְשָׂאִים.

This mishna discusses the blessings recited over various foods. **How does one recite a blessing over fruits? Over different fruits that grow on a tree one recites: Who creates fruit of the tree, with the exception of wine.** Although wine is produced from fruit of the tree, due to its significance, its blessing differs from other fruits of the tree. **Over wine one recites: Who creates fruit of the vine. Over fruits that grow from the earth, one recites: Who creates fruit of the ground, with the exception of bread.** Bread, too, is significant and its blessing differs from other fruits of the ground, **as over bread one recites: Who brings forth bread from the earth. Over herbs and leafy vegetables one recites: Who creates fruit of the ground. Rabbi Yehuda says** that there is room to distinguish between fruits that grow from the earth, herbs, and leafy vegetables. Although they are all fruit of the ground, since they have different qualities, the blessing on the latter is: **Who creates various kinds of herbs.**

### M Berakhot Chapter 9

א. הַרוֹאֶה מְקוֹם שֶׁנִּעְשׂוּ בוֹ נִסִּים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, אוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמְקוֹם הַזֶּה. מְקוֹם שֶׁנִּעְקְרָה מִמֶּנּוּ עֲבוֹדַת זָרָה, אוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ שֶׁעָקַר עֲבוֹדַת זָרָה מֵאַרְצֵנוּ.

One who sees a place where miracles occurred on Israel's behalf recites: Blessed...Who performed miracles for our forefathers in this place. One who sees a place from which idolatry was eradicated recites: Blessed...Who eradicated idolatry from our land.

ב. עַל הַזִּיקוֹן, וְעַל הַזְּנוּעוֹת, וְעַל הַבְּרָקִים, וְעַל הַרְעָמִים, וְעַל הַרוֹחוֹת, אוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ שֶׁפָּחַז וּגְבוּרָתוֹ מִלֵּא עוֹלָם. עַל הַהָרִים, וְעַל הַגְּבָעוֹת, וְעַל הַיַּמִּים, וְעַל הַנְּהָרוֹת, וְעַל הַמְדְּכָרוֹת, אוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ עוֹשֵׂה מַעֲשֵׂה

בְּרֵאשִׁית. רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אוֹמֵר, הַרוּאָה אֶת הַיָּם הַגָּדוֹל אוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ שֶׁעָשָׂה אֶת הַיָּם הַגָּדוֹל, בְּזִמְנֵן שֶׁרוּאָה אוֹתוֹ לְפָרְקִים. עַל הַגְּשָׁמִים וְעַל הַבְּשׂוּרוֹת הַטּוֹבוֹת אוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ הַטּוֹב וְהַמְּטִיב, וְעַל שְׂמוּעוֹת רָעוֹת אוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ דַּיִן הָאֱמֶת.

One who sees conspicuous natural occurrences recites a blessing. **For *zikin* and *zeva'ot***, which the Gemara will discuss below, **for thunder, gale force winds, and lightning**, manifestations of the power of the Creator, one **recites: Blessed...Whose strength and power fill the world.** **For extraordinary (Rambam) mountains, hills, seas, rivers, and deserts, one recites: Blessed...Author of creation.** Consistent with his opinion that a separate blessing should be instituted for each individual species, **Rabbi Yehuda says: One who sees the great sea recites a special blessing: Blessed...Who made the great sea.** As with all blessings of this type, one only recites it **when he sees the sea intermittently**, not on a regular basis.

**For rain and other good tidings, one recites the special blessing: Blessed...Who is good and Who does good.** Even for bad tidings, one recites a special blessing: **Blessed...the true Judge.**

ג. בְּנֵה בַּיִת חֲדָשׁ, וְקָנָה כֵּלִים חֲדָשִׁים, אוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ שֶׁהֵחִינּוּ. מְבָרַךְ עַל הַרְעָה מֵעֵין הַטּוֹבָה, וְעַל הַטּוֹבָה מֵעֵין הַרְעָה. הַצּוֹעֵק לְשַׁעֲבֵר, הֲרִי זֶה תִּפְלֵת שָׂוָא. כִּי־צַד. הֲיִתָּה אֲשֶׁתּוֹ מְעַבְרָת, וְאָמַר, יְהִי רָצוֹן שֶׁתִּלְדִּי אֲשֶׁתִּי זָכָר, הֲרִי זֶה תִּפְלֵת שָׂוָא. הֲיָה בָּא בְּדַרְךְ וְשָׁמַע קוֹל צְוֹחָה בְּעִיר, וְאָמַר יְהִי רָצוֹן שֶׁלֹּא יְהִי אֱלוֹ בְּנֵי בֵּיתִי, הֲרִי זֶה תִּפְלֵת שָׂוָא.

Similarly, when one **built a new house or purchased new vessels, he recites: Blessed...Who has given us life, sustained us, and brought us to this time.** The mishna articulates a general principle: **One recites a blessing for the bad that befalls him just as he does for the good.** In other words, one recites the appropriate blessing for the trouble that he is experiencing at present despite the fact that it may conceal some positive element in the future. **Similarly, one must recite a blessing for the good that befalls him just as for the bad.**

The mishna states: **And one who cries out over the past** in an attempt to change that which has already occurred, **it is a vain prayer.** For example, **one whose wife was pregnant and he says: May it be God's will that my wife will give birth to a male child, it is a vain prayer.** Or **one who was walking on the path home and he heard the sound of a scream in the city, and he says: May it be God's will that this scream will not be from my house, it is a vain prayer.** In both cases, the event already occurred.

ד. הַנְּכַנֵּס לְכַרְךָ מִתְפַּלֵּל שְׁתֵּים, אַחַת בְּכַנְיֻסְתּוֹ וְאַחַת בִּיציאתו. בֶּן עֲזַאי אוֹמֵר, אַרְבַּע, שְׁתֵּים בְּכַנְיֻסְתּוֹ וְשְׁתֵּים בִּיציאתו, וְנוֹתֵן הַוּדְאָה לְשֶׁעֶבֶר, וְצוֹעֵק לְעֵתִיד לְבֹא.

The Sages also said: **One who enters a large city**, the Gemara explains below that this is in a case where entering the city is dangerous, **recites two prayers: One upon his entrance**, that he may enter in peace, **and one upon his exit**, that he may leave in peace. **Ben Azzai says:** He recites **four prayers, two upon his entrance and two upon his exit**. In addition to praying that he may enter and depart in peace, he **gives thanks for the past and cries out in prayer for the future**.

ה. חֵיב אָדָם לְבָרֵךְ עַל הַרְעָה כְּשֵׁם שֶׁהוּא מְבָרֵךְ עַל הַטּוֹבָה, שְׁנֹאמֵר: וְאַהֲבַת אֵת יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדְךָ (דברים ו':ה) בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ, בְּשֵׁנֵי יִצְרֶיךָ, בְּיֵצֶר טוֹב וּבְיֵצֶר רָע. וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ, אֲפִלוּ הוּא נוֹטֵל אֶת נַפְשְׁךָ. וּבְכָל מְאֹדְךָ, בְּכָל מְמוֹנְךָ. דְּבַר אַחֵר בְּכָל מְאֹדְךָ, בְּכָל מִדָּה וּמִדָּה שֶׁהוּא מוֹדֵד לָךְ בְּכָל הַיּוֹם מוֹדֵה לּוֹ בְּכָל מְאֹד מְאֹד. לֹא יִקַּל אָדָם אֶת רֵאשׁוֹ כִּנְגֵד שַׁעַר הַמְּזֻרָח, שֶׁהוּא מְכֻוֵן כִּנְגֵד בַּיִת קִדְשֵׁי הַקְּדוֹשִׁים. לֹא יִכְנֵס לְהַר הַבַּיִת בְּמִקְלוֹ, וּבְמִנְעֻלוֹ, וּבְכַפְנֻדְתּוֹ, וּבְאַבְקַת שַׁעַל רַגְלָיו, וְלֹא יַעֲשֶׂנוּ קַפְנֻדְרִיא, וּרְקִיקָה מִקַּל וְחִמָּר. כָּל חוֹתְמֵי בְּרָכוֹת שֶׁהָיוּ בְּמִקְדָּשׁ, הָיוּ אוֹמְרִים מִן הָעוֹלָם. מִשִּׁקְלָקְלוֹ הַמִּינִין, וְאָמְרוּ, אֵין עוֹלָם אֲלֵא אֶחָד, הַתְּקִינוּ שֶׁיְהוּ אוֹמְרִים, מִן הָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם. וְהַתְּקִינוּ, שֶׁיְהֵא אָדָם שׂוֹאֵל אֶת שְׁלוֹם חֲבֵרוֹ בְּשֵׁם, שְׁנֹאמֵר: וְהִנֵּה בַעַז בָּא מִבַּיִת לְחֵם וַיֹּאמֶר לְקוֹצְרִים יי עִמְכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ יְבָרְכֶךָ יי) רות ב':ד) וְאוֹמֵר: יי עִמָּךְ גְּבוּר הַחֵיִל (שופטים ו':כ"ב). וְאוֹמֵר: אֵל תְּבוֹז כִּי זָקְנָה אִמָּךְ (משלי כ"ג:כ"ב). וְאוֹמֵר: עֵת לַעֲשׂוֹת לִי הַפְּרוֹ תוֹרָתְךָ (תהלים קי"ט:קכ"ו). רַבִּי נֵתָן אוֹמֵר, הַפְּרוּ תוֹרָתְךָ עֵת לַעֲשׂוֹת לִי.

The mishna articulates a general principle: **One is obligated to recite a blessing for the bad that befalls him just as he recites a blessing for the good that befalls him, as it is stated: “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart**, with all your soul, and with all your might” (Deuteronomy 6:5). The mishna explains this verse as follows: **“With all your heart”** means **with your two inclinations, with your good inclination and your evil inclination**, both of which must be subjugated to the love of God. **With all your soul** means **even if God takes your soul**.

**“And with all your might”** means **with all your money**, as money is referred to in the Bible as might. **Alternatively**, it may be explained that **“with all your might”** means **with every measure that He metes out to you**; whether it is good or troublesome, **thank Him**.

The mishna teaches several Temple-related *halakhot*. **One may not act irreverently** or conduct himself flippantly **opposite the eastern gate** of the Temple Mount, **which is aligned opposite the Holy of Holies**. In deference to the Temple, one **may not enter the Temple Mount with his staff, his shoes, his money belt [punda], or even the dust on his feet**. **One may not make the Temple a shortcut** to pass through it, **and through an a fortiori inference**, all the more so **one may not spit** on the Temple Mount.

The mishna relates: **At the conclusion of all blessings recited in the Temple, those reciting the blessing would say:** Blessed are You Lord, God of Israel, **until everlasting [haolam]**, the world. But **when the Sadducees strayed and declared that there is but one world** and there is no World-to-Come, the Sages **instituted that** at the conclusion of the blessing **one recites: From everlasting [haolam] to everlasting [haolam]**.

The Sages also **instituted that one should greet another in the name of God**, i.e., one should mention God’s name in his greeting, **as it is stated:** **“And presently Boaz came from Bethlehem and said to the harvesters, The Lord is with you, and they said to him, May the Lord bless you”** ([Ruth 2:4](#)). **And it says:** “And the angel of God appeared to him and said to him, **God is with you, mighty man of valor”** ([Judges 6:12](#)). **And it says:** “**And despise not your mother when she is old”** ([Proverbs 23:22](#)), i.e., one must not neglect customs which he inherits. **And** lest you say that mentioning God’s name is prohibited, **it says:** “**It is time to work for the Lord; they have made void Your Torah”** ([Psalms 119:126](#)), i.e., it is occasionally necessary to negate biblical precepts in order to perform God’s will, and greeting another is certainly God’s will. **Rabbi Natan says** another interpretation of the verse: **“Make void Your Torah”** because **“it is the time**

**to work for the Lord,”** i.e., occasionally it is necessary to negate biblical precepts in order to bolster the Torah.

### **Study Questions**

1. M Berakhot 6:1 lists categories of food items and the blessings they require prior to eating – which of these can be found in the creation story in Bereishit chapter 1?
2. Why are bread and wine singled out for special blessings?
3. What kinds of blessings are listed in M. Berakhot Chapter 9, and how do they differ from the blessings of Chapter 6?
4. Both m. 2 and m. 5 of Chapter 9 relate to the obligation to recite a blessing over bad events or tidings. What is the difference between these two mishnayot?