

BERAKOTH¹ ('BENEDICTIONS')

1. 1. From what time in the evening may the *Shema*² be recited? From the time when the priests³ enter [the Temple] to eat of their Heave-offering⁴ until the end of the first watch.⁵ So R. Eliezer. But the Sages say: Until midnight. Rabban Gamaliel says: Until the rise of dawn. His sons once returned [after midnight] from a wedding feast. They said to him, 'We have not recited the *Shema*'. He said to them, 'If the dawn has not risen ye are [still] bound to recite it. Moreover, wheresoever the Sages prescribe "Until midnight"⁶ the duty of fulfilment lasts until the rise of dawn'. The duty of burning the fat pieces and the members [of the animal offerings]⁷ lasts until the rise of dawn; and for all [offerings] that must be consumed 'the same day',⁸ the duty lasts until the rise of dawn. Why then have the Sages said: Until midnight? To keep a man far from transgression.

2. From what time in the morning may the *Shema* be recited? So soon as one can distinguish between blue and white. R. Eliezer says: Between blue and green. And it should be finished before sunrise. R. Joshua says: Before the third hour: for so is that the way of kings, to rise up at the third hour. He that recites it from that time onward suffers no loss and is like to one that reads in the Law.

3. The School of Shammai say: In the evening all should recline when they recite [the *Shema*], but in the morning they should stand up, for it is written, *And when thou liest down and when thou risest up*.⁹ But the School of Hillel say: They may recite it every one in his own way, for it is written, *And when thou walkest by the way*.¹⁰ Why then is it written, *And when thou liest down and when thou risest up*? [It means] the time when men usually lie down and the time when men usually rise up. R. Tarfon said: I was once on a journey and I reclined to recite [the *Shema*] in accordance with the words of the School of Shammai, and so put myself in jeopardy by reason of robbers. They said to him: Thou hadst deserved aught that befell thee in that thou didst transgress the words of the School of Hillel.

4. In the morning two Benedictions¹¹ are said before [the *Shema*] and one after;¹² and in the evening two Benedictions are said before¹³ and two after,¹⁴ the one long and the other short. Where the long is prescribed the short is not permissible; where the short is prescribed the long is not permissible. [Where it is prescribed] to seal¹⁵ [a Benediction] it is not

¹ See Introd. p. xxiv, n. 1. The term includes not only blessing and thanksgiving but also prayer and intercession. The tractate gives rules concerning the times and manner of saying the *Shema* ('Hear, O Israel' App. I, 38) and the *Tefillah* (the 'Eighteen Benedictions', App. I, 46), the main constituents of the regular Jewish order of prayer, as well as the forms of prayer or 'grace' to be said over food of various kinds, and the 'ejaculatory prayers' called forth on sundry occasions.

² See Tam. 5¹.
³ Who have suffered uncleanness (Lev. 22⁴⁻⁷). They must immerse themselves and await sunset before they are fit to eat of the Hallowed Things or Heave-offering. After immersion and until sunset they still suffer a lesser degree of uncleanness. See *Teb. Y.*, p. 773, n. 6.

⁴ Num. 18⁸⁻²⁰. See App. I, 48 (i).

⁵ The third or the fourth hour of the night, according to whether the night was divided into four or three watches.

⁶ See *Zeb.* 5^{9, 5, 8, 8, 6¹}.
⁷ See Lev. 6^{12, 7^{9, 31, 33}}. Cf. *Meg.* 2⁹. Some texts add: And the eating of the Passover offerings. Ex. 12¹⁰. Cf. *Zeb.* 5⁶.
⁸ Lev. 7^{15ff}.
⁹ Deut. 6⁷.
¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ See Singer, p. 37 ('Blessed art thou . . . who formest light') and p. 39 ('With abounding love . . .'). Cf. *Meg.* 4^{3, 5}.
¹² Singer, p. 42 ('True and firm . . .').

¹³ Singer, p. 96 ('Who bringest twilight', and 'With everlasting love').

¹⁴ Singer, p. 98 ('True and trustworthy . . .') and p. 99 ('Make us lie down . . .').

¹⁵ To end the Benediction with the appropriate formula 'Blessed art thou, O Lord, . . .'

permissible not to seal; and [where it is prescribed] not to seal, it is not permissible to seal.

5. The going forth from Egypt¹ is rehearsed [also] at night. R. Eleazar b. Azariah said: Lo, I am like to one that is seventy years old yet failed to prove² why the going forth from Egypt should be rehearsed at night until Ben Zoma thus expounded it: It is written, *That thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life*.³ 'The days of thy life' [would mean] the days only; but *all the days of thy life* [means] the nights also. The Sages say: 'The days of thy life' [means] this world only, but *all the days of thy life* is to include the Days of the Messiah.

2. 1. If a man was reading [the verses of the *Shema*] in the Law and the time came to recite the *Shema*, if he directed his heart⁴ he has fulfilled his obligation; otherwise he has not fulfilled his obligation. Between the sections⁵ he may salute a man out of respect and return a greeting; but in the middle [of a section] he may salute a man [only] out of fear of him, and return a greeting. So R. Meir. R. Judah says: In the middle he may salute a man out of fear of him and return a greeting out of respect; between the sections he may salute a man out of respect and return the greeting of any man.

2. By 'between the sections' is meant: between the first Benediction and the second;⁶ between the second Benediction and *Hear, O Israel . . .*;⁷ between *Hear, O Israel . . .* and *It shall come to pass if ye shall hearken*;⁸ between *It shall come to pass if ye shall hearken* and *And the Lord spake unto Moses*;⁹ between *And the Lord spake unto Moses* and 'True and firm . . .'¹⁰ R. Judah says: There may be no break between *And the Lord spake unto Moses* and 'True and firm . . .' R. Joshua b. Karha said: Why does the section *Hear, O Israel* precede *And it shall come to pass if ye shall hearken*?—so that a man may first take upon him the yoke of the kingdom of heaven and afterward take upon him the yoke of the commandments. [And why does the section] *And it shall come to pass if ye shall hearken* precede *And the Lord spake unto Moses*? Because *And it shall come to pass if ye shall hearken* applies both by day and by night, but *And the Lord spake unto Moses* applies by day only.

3. If a man recited the *Shema* but not loudly enough for himself to hear, he has fulfilled his obligation.¹¹ R. Jose says: He has not fulfilled it. If he recited it without clearly pronouncing the letters, R. Jose says: He has fulfilled his obligation. R. Judah says: He has not fulfilled it. If a man recited [the sections] in wrong order, he has not fulfilled his obligation. If he recited it and fell into error he should go back to where he fell into error.

4. Craftsmen may recite the *Shema* on the top of a tree or on top of a course of stones, which they may not do when they say the *Tefillah*.¹²

5. A bridegroom is exempt from reciting the *Shema* on the first night, or until the close of the [next] Sabbath if he has not consummated the marriage. Once when Rabban Gamaliel married he recited the *Shema*

¹ Referring to the third section of the *Shema*, Num. 15³⁷⁻⁴¹, which mentions the exodus in the last verse; but the rest deals only with the law of fringes which does not apply at night time.
² Or, 'was not worthy (to understand)'.
³ Deut. 16³.

⁴ Intentionally read the passage as a fulfilment of his duty. Cf. R. Sh. 3^{7f}.

⁵ The breaks between each Benediction and portion of Scripture constituting the *Shema*.

⁶ See above, 1⁴.
⁷ Deut. 6^{4ff}.
⁸ Deut. 11^{13f}.
⁹ Num. 15^{37f}.

¹⁰ Singer, p. 42.
¹¹ Some texts add: So R. Judah.
¹² See below, 4^{1ff}, and App. I, 46.

on the first night. His disciples said to him, 'Master, didst thou not teach us that a bridegroom is exempt from reciting the *Shema*' on the first night?' He said to them, 'I will not hearken to you to cast off from myself the yoke of the kingdom of heaven even for a moment'.

6. He washed himself the first night of his wife's death. His disciples said to him, 'Master, didst thou not teach us that a mourner is forbidden to wash himself?' He replied, 'I am not like other men: I am infirm'.

7. And when his slave Tabi died he accepted condolence because of him. They said to him, 'Master, didst thou not teach us that men may not accept condolence because of slaves?' He replied, 'My slave Tabi was not like other slaves: he was a worthy man'.

8. If a bridegroom is minded to recite the *Shema*' on the first night he may recite it. Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel says: Not every one that is minded to assume the name¹ may assume it.

3. 1. He whose dead lies unburied before him is exempt from reciting the *Shema*', from saying the *Tefillah* and from wearing phylacteries.² They that bear the bier and they that relieve them, and they that relieve these, they that go before and they that follow after the bier—they that are needful for the bier are exempt, but they that are not needful are not exempt [from reciting the *Shema*']. Both alike are exempt from saying the *Tefillah*.

2. When they have buried the dead and returned, if they can begin [the *Shema*'] and finish it before reaching the Row³ they begin it; but if they can not, they do not begin it. Of them that stand in the Row, they of the inner line are exempt [from reciting the *Shema*'] but they of the outer line are not exempt.

3. Women and slaves and minors are exempt from reciting the *Shema*' and from wearing phylacteries, but they are not exempt from saying the *Tefillah*, from the law of the *Mezuzah*⁴ or from saying the Benediction after meals.

4. He that has suffered a pollution⁵ should ponder [over the *Shema*'] in his heart but he may say no Benediction before it or after it. Over a meal he should say the Benediction which follows after but not that which goes before. R. Judah says: He should say both the Benediction which goes before and the Benediction which follows after.

5. If he was standing during the *Tefillah* and then remembered that he had suffered a pollution he should not break off [his prayer] but he must shorten it. If he went down to immerse himself and, before sunrise, had time to come up, clothe himself and recite [the *Shema*'], he may come up, clothe himself and recite it; but if not, he must remain covered with water and recite it. But he must not remain covered with foul water⁶ or water used for soaking [flax], unless he had poured [clean] water therein. And [when a man recites the *Shema*'] how far should he go apart from it⁷ and from excrement? Four cubits.

6. If a man with flux⁸ suffered a pollution, or if a menstruant⁹ discharged

¹ A reputation for piety which he has not otherwise earned.

² See p. 104, n. 16. Some texts add, 'and from all the duties enjoined in the Law'.

³ After the burial, friends of the mourners form themselves into rows between which the mourners pass and receive condolence. The Mishnah here speaks of a double row. Cf. Meg. 4¹.

⁴ App. I. 25.

⁵ Lev. 15¹⁰.

⁶ Evil-smelling liquid or urine.

⁷ Urine.

⁸ Lev. 15^{2ff}.

⁹ Lev. 15^{10ff}.

semen, or if a woman suffered a flow during intercourse, they must immerse themselves.¹ R. Judah pronounces them exempt.

4. 1. The morning *Tefillah*² [may be said any time] until midday. R. Judah says: Until the fourth hour. The afternoon *Tefillah* [may be said any time] until sunset. R. Judah says: Until midway through the afternoon. The evening *Tefillah* has no set time; and the Additional *Tefillah* [may be said] any time during the day. R. Judah says: Until the seventh hour.

2. R. Nehunya b. ha-Kanah used to pray a short prayer when he entered the House of Study and when he came forth. They said to him, 'What is the nature of this prayer?' He replied, 'When I enter I pray that no offence shall happen through me, and when I come forth I give thanks for my lot'.

3. Rabban Gamaliel says: A man should pray the Eighteen [Benedictions]³ every day. R. Joshua says: The substance⁴ of the Eighteen. R. Akiba says: If his prayer is fluent in his mouth he should pray the Eighteen, but if not, the substance of the Eighteen.

4. R. Eliezer says: He that makes his prayer a fixed task, his prayer is no supplication. R. Joshua says: He that journeys in a place of danger should pray a short prayer,⁵ saying, 'Save, O Lord, the remnant of Israel; at their every cross-road⁶ let their needs come before thee. Blessed art thou, O Lord, that hearest prayer!'

5. If he was riding on an ass he should dismount [to say the *Tefillah*]. If he cannot dismount he should turn his face [toward Jerusalem]; and if he cannot turn his face, he should direct his heart toward the Holy of Holies.

6. If he was journeying on a ship⁷ or a raft he should direct his heart toward the Holy of Holies.

7. R. Eleazar b. Azariah says: The additional *Tefillah* may be said only with the local congregation. But the Sages say: Either with the local congregation or without them. R. Judah says in his⁸ name: Wheresoever there is a local congregation the individual is exempt from saying the Additional *Tefillah*.

5. 1. None may stand up to say the *Tefillah* save in sober mood. The pious men of old used to wait an hour before they said the *Tefillah*, that they might direct their heart toward God. Even if the king salutes a man he may not return the greeting; and even if a snake was twisted around his heel he may not interrupt his prayer.

2. We make mention of 'the Power of Rain'⁹ in [the Benediction] 'the Resurrection of the Dead',¹⁰ and we pray for rain in the Benediction 'The Years',¹¹ and [we make mention of] *Habdalah*¹² in [the Benediction] 'Thou

¹ Before they may say the *Tefillah*. This is in addition to the immersion prescribed for their particular major uncleanness.

² The 'Eighteen Benedictions'. See App. I. 46. Cf. Taan. 2².

³ Now nineteen. One was later added denouncing the 'slanderers' (Singer, p. 48) who brought evil on the congregation. It is now the twelfth in order.

⁴ Or 'abstract'. The Gemara (29a) here gives a shortened form, reproduced in the present-day Jewish Prayer-book (Singer, p. 55, *Habimenu*).

⁵ Some texts add, 'the substance of the Eighteen'.

⁶ In the metaphorical sense. Bert. and Tif. Yis. render: Whosoever they go apart in transgression.

⁷ Some texts add, 'wagon'.

⁸ R. Eleazar b. Azariah's.

⁹ See Taan. 1¹. ¹⁰ The second of the Eighteen Benedictions. Singer, p. 44 (bottom).

¹¹ The ninth Benediction. Singer, p. 47 (bottom).

¹² See App. I. 9.