

משנה ברכות - קבע, כוונה

In this unit, we will take a look at a number of משניות in מסכת ברכות which deal with both קבע and כוונה in prayer. The משניות that we will be reading relate to the שמע and to the עמידה. It will be an opportunity to learn more about the שמע and the עמידה while learning about the role of קבע and כוונה in prayer.

In order to assist you with your study of these משניות, you are being provided with an "organizer for studying a rabbinic text". This organizer has the following items for you to complete for each mishna:

1. Difficult words with explanations
2. English translation of the text
3. Main points of the text
4. Questions and personal comments on the text

The organizer, which is found on the next page, can also be helpful to you with the study of other rabbinic texts. Make copies of it for the study of משניות in this unit. You should note in #1 of the organizer other unfamiliar words that are not in the glossary that is provided. At the top right hand portion of the organizer, indicate which passage is being studied. Also, when studying a commentary with the text, divide the paper so that you will be completing the four parts of organizer for the text on the left side of the paper and the four parts for the commentary on the right side.

As you read each mishna, note whether the mishna emphasizes the aspect of קבע or כוונה in prayer. In the worksheet that follows, you will be asked to note which one is being emphasized in each משנה.

Rabbi Harold H. Bell, DHL

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Text _____

Date _____

ORGANIZER FOR STUDYING A RABBINIC TEXT

1. Difficult words with explanations
2. English translation of the text
3. Main points of the text
4. Questions and personal comments on the text

ברכות א:א

1. What three paragraphs from the Torah are included in the שמע? Check a siddur and write down the first few words which identify each paragraph.

2. When is the earliest time one may recite the שמע in the evening according to the mishna?

3. State three points of view regarding the latest time to recite the שמע in the evening and the name of the rabbinic authority for each point of view.

4. What question is asked of Rabban Gamliel by his sons? What is Rabban Gamliel's response?

5. Explain the reason: כדי להרחיק את האדם מן העברה. What is the thinking behind this reason?

6. Does this mishna focus more on the קבע or כוונה aspect of prayer? Explain.

ברכות א:ב

1. There are two points of view stated in the mishna regarding the earliest time to recite the שמע in the morning. The first point of view is stated by the תנא קמא, which means "first תנא" (תנא = sage in the time of the Mishna). He is so identified as the "first" one since this תנא is mentioned anonymously. Indicate which point of view regarding the earliest time for the שמע is that of the תנא קמא and which is the point of view of R. Eliezer.

2. What are the points of view of the תנא קמא and R. Yehoshua regarding the latest time to say the שמע in the morning?

3. The mishna gives a ruling regarding one who has not recited the שמע by the deadline:

הקורא מכאן ואילך לא הפסיד כאדם הקורא בתורה.

R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro (who lived in Italy, then Israel in the 15th century) is considered a basic commentary on the Mishna. Read his comments on each of the following phrases from this mishna and summarize these comments in your own words:

לא הפסיד -

כאדם הקורא בתורה -

4. Does this mishna focus more on the כוונה or קבע aspect of prayer? Explain.

ברכות א:ג

1. What is the disagreement between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel regarding the physical position of a person reciting the שמע? What words does each one quote and how do these words support their positions?

2. How does Beit Hillel interpret the words that Beit Shammai uses to support its position?

3. Whose practice does R. Tarfon follow? What criticism did the Rabbis give regarding R. Tarfon's practice?

4. Does this mishna focus more on the *כוונה* or *קבע* aspect of prayer? Explain.

ברכות א:ד

1. How many blessing are recited before and after the *שמע* in the morning? Locate these blessings in a *סדר* and write down the first and last words of each of these blessings. (The commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro identifies these blessings.) Look at the *חתימה* (conclusion) of the *ברכה* as well as the words which you recognize from the text. These will help identify the main theme of each *ברכה*. State the main theme of each *ברכה*.

2. How many blessing are recited before and after the *שמע* in the evening? Locate these blessings in a *סדר* and write down the first and last words of each of these blessings. (The commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro identifies these blessings.) Look at the *חתימה* (conclusion) of the *ברכה* as well as the words which you recognize from the text. These will help identify the main theme of each *ברכה*. State the main theme of each *ברכה*.

3. What does the Mishna mean by: אחת ארכה ואחת קצרה? You will find an explanation for this in the commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro. Note the meaning of the following used in this commentary:

a. The letter א when used as a prefix to a word in Aramaic is the same as the word על ("on") in Hebrew. Here it is translated as "to".

b. The word קאי in Aramaic means "stand". Here it is translated as "refers to".

4. What does the mishna mean when it states:

מקום שאמרו להאריך אינו רשאי לקצר.

מקום שאמרו לקצר אינו רשאי להאריך.

5. How does R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro explain the terms:

לחתום -

שלא לחתום -

Why do you think that the blessings under the category of שלא לחתום are included in the section about the שמע even though they have nothing to do with the שמע?

6. What does the mishna mean when it states:

לחתום אינו רשאי שלא לחתום

ושלא לחתום אינו רשאי לחתום

7. Does this mishna focus more on the קבע or כוונה aspect of prayer? Explain.

ברכות א:ה

1. This mishna begins with the statement that one should mention יציאת מצרים at night. To what passage in the שמע does יציאת מצרים refer? You will find the answer in the opening words of the commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro to this משנה.

2. According to R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro this passage, which mentions יציאת מצרים, is recited at night even though it includes a mitzva which is not a night time mitzva. What is this mitzva and what words does R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro quote from the Torah to show that it is not a night time mitzva?

3. R. Elazar ben Azariah states that he could not convince the sages to have יציאת מצרים recited at night until he heard an interpretation of Ben Zoma on the words:

למען תזכר את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיך

a. What is Ben Zoma's interpretation of these words?

b. The mishna then states the interpretation of the חכמים for this same passage. This interpretation has nothing to do with the שמע but is included here with Ben Zoma's interpretation which does relate to the שמע. What is the interpretation of the חכמים for this passage?

4. Does this mishna focus more on the קבע or כוונה aspect of prayer? Explain.

ברכות ב:א

1. In order to understand this mishna it is helpful to read and write down the commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro on the following:

היה קורא בתורה

והגיע זמן

State the circumstances when these words of the משנה would apply (for example, if one were studying Torah in the late afternoon).

2. The mishna then states that in the circumstances described in #1 above, one has fulfilled one's obligation of doing the mitzva of כיון לבו if one קריאת שמע. What does כיון לבו mean?

3. In order to understand the meaning of כיון לבו אם היה קורא בתורה . . . it is necessary to be aware of the two views on whether מצות צריכות כוונה -- whether proper intention is necessary for one to fulfill a mitzva properly. There are those who say that מצות צריכות כוונה, that it is necessary for one to have כוונה in order to satisfy the requirements of a mitzva. There are others who say that מצות אין צריכות כוונה, that it is not necessary for one to have כוונה in order to satisfy the requirements of doing a mitzva. Read the commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro "אם כוון לבו יצא" and דבור המתחיל, and complete the following:

a. If מצות צריכות כוונה, then:

= היה קורא בתורה

= אם כיון לבו

b. If מצות אין צריכות כוונה, then:

= היה קורא בתורה

= אם כיון לבו

c. According to R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro which viewpoint do we follow: מצות צריכות כוונה or אין צריכות כוונה?

4. Complete the following chart, which summarizes the rest of משנה ברכות ב:א:

According to R. Meir, in between paragraphs one may . . .

According to R. Meir, in the middle of a paragraph one may . . .

According to R. Yehuda, in the middle of a paragraph one may . . .

According to R. Yehuda, in between paragraphs one may . . .

5. Does this mishna focus more on the aspect of prayer? Explain.

ברכות ב:ב

1. The beginning of this mishna defines what is meant by בפרקים (in between paragraphs). List each of the places in this category:

2. R. Yehuda states that between the ויאמר (the third paragraph of the שמע) and the אמת ויציב (the blessing after the שמע in the morning) is not considered בפרקים and, therefore, one may not interrupt one's recitation at that time. R. Yehuda's point of view is based on a verse from ירמיהו which

is quoted in the commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro, "בין המתחיל, ויאמר לאמת ויציב לא יפסיק" Write out this verse and explain why it is a basis for R. Yehuda's point of view.

3. a. Give the exact Biblical chapter and verses of the three paragraphs of the שמע. Which of these paragraphs comes first in the Torah? Which one second? Which one third? Note this order next to each paragraph.

שמע

והיה אם שמוע

ויאמר

b. As you can see, these verses are not in the same order in the סדור as they are in the Torah. R. Yehoshua ben Korcha states the reasons for their order in the סדור. Give the reason that the שמע comes before the והיה אם שמוע.

c. Give the reason why the והיה אם שמוע comes before the ויאמר.

d. Note that R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro quotes a passage from the והיה אם שמוע to show that it contains a mitzva that is practiced both day and night. What is the mitzva that he quotes?

e. R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro quotes a passage from the ויאמר to show that it contains a mitzva that is practiced during the daytime only. What is the mitzva that he quotes? What in the words that he quotes from the תורה indicates that it is practiced only during the daytime?

4. Does this mishna focus more on the *כוונה* or *קבע* aspect of prayer? Explain.

ברכות ביג

1. a. The first part of this mishna is a *מחלוקת* (disagreement) between the *תנא קמא* and R. Yose regarding the necessity to read the words of the *שמע* so that the one who recites the *שמע* can hear these words. What are the views of the *תנא קמא* and R. Yose?

b. The *תנא קמא* and R. Yose base their points of view on different interpretations of the word *שמע* in the opening line of the first paragraph of the *שמע*. The commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro, "רבי יוסי אומר לא יצא" *דבור המתחיל*, gives their interpretations of the word *שמע*. What are their interpretations and how does each interpretation form the basis for their viewpoints on the mishna?

c. The commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro states the *הלכה*. According to whom is the *הלכה*?

2. a. The next part of this mishna includes a *מחלוקת* between R. Yose and R. Yehuda regarding one who is not precise in pronouncing the letters of the words in the *שמע*. The words in the mishna for this are *ולא דקדק באותיותיה*. What are the points of view of R. Yose and R. Yehuda?

b. The commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro explains these words. In your own words, summarize briefly what is meant by the words **ולא דקדק באותיותיה**. Give two examples from the commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro.

c. What is the הלכה in this case? The answer to this question is in the first part of the commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro

דבור המתחיל, "ר' יוסי אומר יצא"

3. a. What does the Mishna mean when it states that one who reads the שמע out of order (למפרע) has not fulfilled one's obligation? The answer for this is in commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro

דבור המתחיל, "לא יצא"

b. In this commentary is also the ruling about one who accidentally reads the three paragraphs in an order different from the one in the siddur. What is the הלכה in this case and what is the reason for this הלכה?

4. The last part of this mishna deals with one who loses one's place while reading the שמע. The commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro

"יחזור למקום שטעה" דבור המתחיל, describes the procedure about what to do in four cases where one loses one's place. Indicate below what one should do in each of these cases:

a. If a person knows that it is between paragraphs, but forgot which two paragraphs (two opinions) -

b. If a person lost one's place in the middle of a paragraph and remembers what paragraph it is but does not remember where in the paragraph -

c. If a person is reading וכתבתם but forgot whether it was from the first paragraph of the שמע or the second paragraph -

d. If a person has read וכתבתם but forgot whether it was from the first paragraph of the שמע or the second paragraph and was reciting the words למען ירבו (which follow the verse that begins with וכתבתם in the second paragraph) -

5. Does this mishna focus more on the קבע or כוונה aspect of prayer? Explain.

ברכות ב:ד

1. a. Why may workers recite the שמע even on top of a tree or a stone wall? The answer to this question is found in the commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro, "נדבך", דבור המתחיל.

b. What is the explanation of the word נדבך in this commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro?

2. The commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro "מה שאין רשאיין דבור המתחיל, "דבור המתחיל", "מה שאין רשאיין רשאין" uses the words דצלותא רחמי היא to explain why one is required to go down from the top of a tree or a stone wall in order to recite the עמידה. The Hebrew translation for these Aramaic words is שתפלה היא (בקשה לרחמים). Explain in your own words what this means.

3. Does this mishna focus more on the קבע or כוונה aspect of prayer? Explain.

ברכות ד:א

1. a. This mishna deals with the times for reciting תפלה ("prayer"), which is

the talmudic term for what is known today as the עמידה or the שמונה עשרה. It was known as תפלה because it was prayer par excellence (of the highest quality). תפלה differs from the recitation of the שמע and the blessings which come before and after it (קריאת שמע וברכותיה) in that קריאת שמע is a mitzva of reciting certain passages from the Torah, whereas תפלה is when we pour out our hearts and soul to address God. They are both the essential part of the service, but they are different in nature.

b. תפלה is also known as the עמידה because one stands at attention when reciting it. See משנה ברכות ה:א where standing is mentioned in reference to תפלה.

c. תפלה is also known as the שמונה עשרה because the weekday תפלה originally had eighteen blessings. (Now there are nineteen.) See משנה ד:ג ברכות where the requirement to recite eighteen blessings in the תפלה is mentioned.

2. Now we are ready to look at משנה ברכות ד:א. The latest times for the recitation of each עמידה is stated. In three of the four cases R. Yehuda disagrees with the תנא קמא. Note below the points of view for each עמידה.

| תפלה | תנא קמא | ר' יהודה |
|-------|---------|----------|
| שחרית | | |
| מנחה | | |
| ערבית | | |
| מוסף | | |

3. Does this mishna focus more on the כוונה or קבע aspect of prayer? Explain.

ברכות ד:ב

1. a. At what two points did R. N'chunya b. Hakana say a short prayer?

b. What was the nature of each prayer? In explaining the nature of each prayer, it will be helpful to look at the following from the commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro "שלא תארע תקלה" דבור המתחיל, and the first part of "אני נותן הודיה על חלקי" (up to and including the words מיושבי בית המדרש).

2. Does this mishna focus more on the *כוונה* or *קבע* aspect of prayer? Explain.

ברכות ד:ג

1. Three *תנאים* state points of view regarding the number of *ברכות* a person should recite as *תפלה*. What are the views of these *תנאים*?

רבן גמליאל -

רבי יהושע -

רבי עקיבא -

2. R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro gives two explanations of *מעין שמונה עשרה* in his commentary "מעין שמונה עשרה" דבור המתחיל, "מעין שמונה עשרה". State briefly these two explanations. Note the meanings of these Aramaic words in this commentary:

אית דמפרשי בגמרא - יש שמפרשים בגמרא

ואית דאמרי - ויש שאומרים

3. Does this mishna focus more on the קבע or כוונה aspect of prayer? Explain.

ברכות ד:ד

1. The first part of this mishna is a statement of רבי אליעזר. Translate this statement into English.

2. How does R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro explain the the term קבע?

3. The second part of this mishna is a statement of רבי יהושע. Translate this statement into English. R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro's explanation of the term העבור פרשת will be helpful in preparing this translation.

4. a. According to R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro in "בכל פרשת העבור", דבור המתחיל, "בכל פרשת העבור" is the תפלה that one recites in a place of danger the one according to ר' יהושע or is it another version? If it is not according to ר' יהושע, state the first three words which identify this תפלה.

b. Once a person is no longer in danger, under what circumstances is that

person required to recite the עמידה? (See the commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro in "בכל פרשת העבור" ,דבור המתחיל,

5. Does this mishna focus more on the קבע or כוונה aspect of prayer? Explain.

ברכות ד:ה

1. According to this משנה, what are three things that a person should do, in order of priority, if one is riding on a donkey and the time for reciting the עמידה is running out?

2. According to the commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro in דבור המתחיל, "היה רוכב על חמור ירד", the הלכה is not according to the משנה סתם (anonymous מנשה, that is, with no תנא listed by name as having stated it). What is the הלכה?

3. Does this mishna focus more on the קבע or כוונה aspect of prayer? Explain.

ברכות ד:ו

1. What is the הלכה stated in this משנה and what do you think is the reason for it?

2. Does this mishna focus more on the קבע or כוונה aspect of prayer? Explain.

ברכות ה:א

1. In what state of mind should one be when reciting the עמידה?

2. What did the early חסידים (pious ones) used to do in order to be in this state of mind?

3. According to R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro in שואל "אפילו המלך" שואל דבור המתחיל, "אפילו נחש כרוך על", בשלומי" עמידה? under what condition may one ignore a king when reciting the עמידה?

4. According to R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro in על "אפילו נחש כרוך על" דבור המתחיל, עקבו" under what condition may one not interrupt one's reciting of the עמידה when confronted by a snake?

5. Does this mishna focus more on the קבע or כוונה aspect of prayer? Explain.

ברכות ה"ב

1. With help of the commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro, state the words to which the following refer:

גבורות גשמים -

שואלים הגשמים -

2. What are the three points of view about where in the Saturday night עמידה one recites the הבדלה paragraph?

תנא קמא -

רבי עקיבא -

רבי אליעזר -

3. What is the הלכה regarding where one recites the הבדלה paragraph? (The answer is found in the commentary of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro in דבור "בחונן הדעת" (המתחיל, "בחונן הדעת").)

4. Does this mishna focus more on the קבע or כוונה aspect of prayer? Explain.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

1. Now that you have studied these משניות in ה, ד, ב, א, פרקים, ברכות, your next assignment is to list below the chapter and משנה number that falls under the appropriate category. To do this, you will need to refer to the last question for each משנה, which states: "Does this mishna focus more on the קבע or כוונה aspect of prayer? Explain." Some משניות may fall under more than one category.

קבע

כוונה

2. Based on the above listing, how do you think the תנאים viewed the issue of the קבע versus כוונה?

GLOSSARY

ברכות א:א

from when - מאמתי

offering of produce to the priest - תרומה

one-third of the night - אשמורה

when dawn arrives - שיעלה עמוד השחר

party - בית המשתה

burning - הקטר

fat - חלבים

limbs - אברים

ברכות א:ב

blue - תכלת

green - כרתי

the sparkling of the sun (sunrise) - הנץ החמה

hour (1/12th of daylight) - שעה

lose - הפסיד

ברכות א:ג

they recline - יטו

and I reclined - והטייתי

and I put myself in danger - וסכנתי בעצמי

on account of - מפני

robbers - לסטים

fitting - כדי

לחוב - to be guilty

שעברת - that you transgressed

ברכות א:ד

להאריך - to make longer

רשאי - have permission

לחתום - to conclude ("seal")

ברכות א:ה

מזכיר - mention

זכיתי - I merited

שדרשה - שדרש אותה - that he interpreted it

לימות - לימים של - to the days of the messiah

ברכות ב:א

המקרא - (שמע) - the reading (of the

לאו - לא

יצא - יצא ידי חובתו - fulfilled one's obligation

בפרקים - in between paragraphs

שואל - greet

משיב - return the greeting

ברכות ב:ב

יפסיק - interrupts

come before - קדמה

belief in God ("the yoke - עול מלכות שמים -
of the kingship of Heaven")

commitment to מצוות ("yoke - עול מצוות -
of מצוות")

only (is not....except) - אינו...אלא

is practiced - נוהג

ברכות ב:ג

cause to hear - השמיע

be precise - דקדק

with its letters - באותיותיה

out of order - למפרע

ברכות ב:ד

workmen - אמנין

tree - אילן

stone wall - נדבך

ברכות ד:א

(perfect day = daylight from 6:00am-6:00pm)

(3:30pm-6:00pm in "perfect day" - מנחה קטנה)

half of מנחה קטנה; in

a "perfect day"= 4:45pm

ברכות ד:ב

the nature of ("the place of") - מקום

it will occur - תארע

stumbling block - תקלה

thanks - הודיה

ברכות ד:ג

similar to - מעין

fluent - שגורה

ברכות ד:ד

supplication (begging for mercy) - תחנונים

save! - הושע

remnant (those who remain) - שארית

ברכות ד:ה

turn - יחזיר

facing - כנגד

ברכות ד:ו

boat - ספינה

wagon - קרון

raft - אסדה

ברכות ה:א

seriousness - כבד ראש

linger, wait - שוהים

God - מקום

he will answer him - ישיבנו

wrapped - כרוך

his heel - עקבו

ברכות ה'ב

mightiness of - גבורות

bringing back to life - תחית

in and of itself - בפני עצמה