

DATING THE COMPOSITION OF *אלקיננו ואלקי אבותינו ברכנו בברכה*

When did אל-הינו ואל-הי אבותינו ברכנו בברכה compose the paragraph: *אל-הינו ואל-הי אבותינו ברכנו בברכה*? The paragraph does not appear in the תלמוד בבלי, the תלמוד ירושלמי, the תלמוד סוּפְרִים or תוספתא. The מהר"ם מרוטנברג reports the following:

שו"ת מהר"ם מרוטנברג חלק ד (דפוס פראג) סימן תרמח-ואעפ"כ נוכל ליישב המנהג וחזורני בי לומר כי אלקיננו אינו כלל מטופסי הברכות שתקנו ק"כ זקנים ומהם כמה נביאים שתקנו י"ח על הסדר. ותוספת היא שהוסיפו בדורות האחרונים. ולא ידעתי מתי הוסיפו. וכן מצאתי בסדר רב עמרם.

We can state with reasonable certainty that the paragraph was not recited as part of מנהג ארץ ישראל:

ספר החילוקים בין בני מזרח ומערב סימן כט'-ארץ מזרח (Babylonia) שליח ציבור מברך ברכת כהנים בקהל, ובני ארץ ישראל אין שליח ציבור מברך ברכת כהנים בקהל, שדורשין: ושמו את שמי, שאסור לאדם להשים את השם, אלא אם כן הוא כהן.

Professor Mordechai Margulies in his PHD Dissertation at Hebrew University (1938) entitled: *The Differences Between Babylonian and Palestinian Jews*, explains the difference in practice as follows:

בני ארץ ישראל אסרו לשליח ציבור שאינו כהן לקרוא בפני הציבור פסוקי ברכת כהנים כדרך אנו נוהגין, ששליח ציבור אומר את פסוקי ברכת כהנים בתוך תפילת אל-הינו ואל-הי אבותינו ברכנו בברכה המשולשת בתורה וכו'. מנהגינו הוא, איפא, מנהג בבלי.

What was the basis for the practice in ארץ ישראל? Professor Margulies points to the following:

תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת מגילה פרק ד' דף עד' טור ג' / מי"א'-מעשה ראובן נקרא ולא מיתרגם. מעשה תמר נקרא ומיתרגם, מעשה עגל הראשון נקרא ומיתרגם והשני נקרא ולא מיתרגם. י"ב- ברכת כהנים ומעשה דוד ואמנון לא ניקרין ולא מיתרגמין. פרק ד' דף עה' טור ג' / הי"א'-ברכות כהנים לא נקראות ולא מיתרגמות; ר' בא בר כהן בעא קומי ר' יוסה מה טעמא? א"ל כה תברכו, לברכה ניתנה, לא ניתנה לקריאה.

The גירסא סוגיא but with a different תלמוד בבלי has a similar גירסא:

תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה דף כה' עמ' א'-משנה. מעשה ראובן נקרא ולא מתרגם, מעשה תמר נקרא ומתרגם, מעשה עגל הראשון נקרא ומתרגם, והשני נקרא ולא מתרגם. ברכת כהנים, מעשה דוד ואמנון - נקראין ולא מתרגמין. גמרא. דף כה עמ' ב'-ברכת כהנים נקראין ולא מתרגמין, מאי טעמא? משום דכתיב (במדבר ו') ישא.

If in **מנהג ארץ ישראל**, only a **כהן** could read **ברכת כהנים**, then did they skip the section of the **תורה** in which **ברכת כהנים** appears when they reached it during the **קריאת התורה** cycle? They did not have to skip the section. **מנהג ארץ ישראל** followed a three or three and one-half year cycle of **קריאת התורה**. They arranged that the section of the **תורה** that includes **ברכת כהנים** be the first section of the week which would be read by a **כהן**.

The fact that **מדרשים** were primarily composed in **ארץ ישראל** allows us to confirm that the paragraph: **אל-הינו ואל-הי אבותינו ברכנו בברכה המשולשת** was not recited as part of **מנהג ארץ ישראל**. A search of the word: **משולשת** by way of the Bar Ilan Digital Judaic Library reveals that although **מדרשים** refer to matters that are **משולש**, they do not include **ברכת כהנים** as one of them:

מדרש תנחומא (בובר) פרשת יתרו סימן ח' – בחדש השלישי. התורה משולשת, ואותיותיה משולשות, והאבות משולשין, והשבט שניתנה על ידו משולש, ומשה שלישי ביניהם, ואותיותיו משולשין, ואחים שלשה, ונצפן לג' ירחים, וביום השלישי, בחדש השלישי. התורה משולשת: תורה נביאים וכתובים; ואותיותיה משולשות אלף בית גימל; האבות משולשין אברהם יצחק ויעקב; ומשה שלישי ביניהם אנכי עומד בין ה' וביניכם (דברים ה ה); ואותיות משולשות: משה; ומשבת שלישי: ראובן שמעון ולוי; ואחים שלשה: משה אהרן ומרים; ונצפן לג': ותצפנהו שלשה ירחים (שמות ב ב), וביום השלישי: כי ביום השלישי ירד ה' וגו' (שם /שמות/ יט יא), ובחדש השלישי שנאמר בחדש השלישי.

מדרש אנדה (בובר) שמות פרק יט ד"ה [א] בחדש השלישי – הכל היה משולש, התורה משולשת, תורה נביאים וכתובים: משנה משולשת, הלכות מדרש ואגדות, הסרסור משולש, משה אהרן מרים; שלשה פעמים מתפללין, ערב ובוקר וצהררים; שלשה פעמים אומרים קדוש קדוש קדוש ה' צב-אות; ישראל שקבלו את התורה משולשים, כהנים לויים ישראלים; האבות משולשים, אברהם יצחק ויעקב; הימים משולשים, שנאמר היו נכונים שלשת ימים (פסוק טו); החדשים משולשים שנאמר בחדש השלישי; ד"א בחדש השלישי. זה סיון שהוא שלישי לחדשים, וניתנה תורה לישראל על ידי שלישי.

We also need to ask the question: Where did the **כהנים** live? While the **בית המקדש** stood, the **כהנים** lived in **ארץ ישראל** with their **משמרות** so that they could serve in the **בית המקדש**. It is not likely that many **כהנים** lived in **בבל** from the time of **עזרא** until the **חורבן**. After the destruction of the **בית המקדש**, the **כהנים** stayed because their livelihood depended on the **מתנות כהונה** that were not tied to the **בית המקדש**; i.e. **תרומה**. On page 174 of his book, *The Rabbinic Class of Roman Palestine in Late Antiquity*, Professor Lee I. Levine, provides a chart showing where the 24 **משמרות כהונה** resettled in the **גליל** after the Bar Kochva rebellion was quashed. Undoubtedly, the economic conditions in **ארץ ישראל** deteriorated at some point forcing the **כהנים** to migrate for their economic survival.

לעלית נשמת פעסיל בת יחיאל מיכל

TRANSLATION OF SOURCES

שו"ת מהר"ם מרוטנברג חלק ד (דפוס פראג) סימן תרמה -We can explain the custom to recite the paragraph: Elokeinu V'Elokei Avoseinu. It is not among the group of Brachot composed by the 120 members of the Great Assembly which included prophets who composed Shemona Esrei to be read in its order. This paragraph was added by later generations. I do not know when this paragraph was added. I did find the paragraph in the Seder Rav Amrom Gaon.

ספר החילוקים בין בני מזרח ומערב סימן כט' -In Babylonia, the prayer leader recites Birchat Kohanim as part of the repetition of Shemona Esrei. In Eretz Yisroel, the prayer leader is prohibited from reciting Birchat Kohanim as part of the repetition of Shemona Esrei because they derive the following rule: the verse states: V'Samu Es Shemi (they will place My name); this is interpreted to mean that it is prohibited for anyone to recite Birchat Kohanim unless he is a Kohain.

Professor Mordechai Margulies-The sages in Eretz Yisroel prohibited a prayer leader who is not a Kohain from reciting Birchat Kohanim as part of the repetition of Shemona Esrei as we do in that the prayer leader recites the verses of Birchat Kohanim in the paragraph beginning Elokeinu V'Elokei Avoseinu Barcheinu Ba'Bracha Ha'Mishuleshes Ba'Torah. Our custom, therefore, follows the Babylonian practice.

תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת מגילה פרק ד' דף ע"ד טור ג' /מ"א' -The incident of Reuven is read in synagogue but is not translated. The story of Tamar is read and translated. The first account of the incident of the golden calf (Shemos 32, 1-20) is both read and translated, the second account (Shemos 32, 21-25) is read but not translated. The blessing of the priests is not read and is not translated. The stories of David (Shmuel 2, 11, 2-17) and Amnon (Shmuel 2, 13, 1-4) are read but are not translated.

תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת מגילה פרק ד' - The blessing of the priests is not read and not translated. Rabbi Bah son of Kohain came before Rabbi Yossi and asked: what is the reason? Rabbi Yossi said: the verse states: Ko Sivarchu (so should you bless); the words were meant to be recited only for purposes of a blessing and not to be simply .read.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה דף כה' ע"א' - The incident of Reuven is read in synagogue but is not translated. The story of Tamar is read and translated. The first account of the incident of the golden calf (Shemos 32, 1-20) is both read and translated, the second account (Shemos 32, 21-25) is read but not translated. The blessing of the priests is read but not translated. The stories of David (Shmuel 2, 11, 2-17) and Amnon (Shmuel 2, 13,

1-4) are read but are not translated.

'עמ' תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה דף כה' עמ' - The blessing of the priests is read but not translated. What is the reason? Because the verse states: Yisah (favor)¹.

ח' ס'מן ה' -מדרש תנחומא (בובר) פרשת יתרו סימן ח' -In the third month. The Torah is threefold; its letters are threefold; our forefathers are threefold; the tribe who delivered the Torah is the third; Moshe was the third of the group; the letters in Moshe's name are three; Moshe was one of three children; Moshe was hidden at after birth for three months; G-d appeared to the Jews at Har Sinai on the third day of preparation in the third month. The Torah is threefold, Torah, Prophets and Scriptures. The words of the Torah are threefold, aleph, beit, gimel. Our forefathers are threefold, Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov. Moshe was one of three in a group as the verse states: I stood between you and G-d. The letters in Moshe's name are three; Mem-Shin-Hay. Moshe came from the third tribe, Reuven, Shimon, Levi. Moshe was the third child, Aharon, Miriam, Moshe. Moshe was hidden for three months after his birth. On the third day; G-d appeared to the Jews at Har Sinai on the third day of preparation as the verse states: on the third day G-d came down. In the third month as the verse states: in the third month.

ישי -מדרש אנדה (בובר) שמות פרק יט ד"ה [א] בחדש השלישי -All is threefold. The Written Torah is threefold, Torah, Prophets and Scriptures. The Oral Torah is threefold, Halachot, Midrash and Aggadatot. The messengers were three, Moshe, Aharon and Miriam. We pray three times a day, night, morning and afternoon. Three times we say the word Kadosh, when we say: Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh Hashem T'zvakot². Yisroel that received the Torah consists of three groups, Kohanim, Leviim and Yisroelim. Our forefathers are threefold, Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov. The days of preparation before receiving the Torah were three, as the verse states: be prepared for three days. The month in which the Torah was given was the third as the verse states: in the third month. Another interpretation of the words: in the third month: this is Sivan which is the third month and the Torah was given then to the Jews by a person who was born third in his family.

1. רש"י מסכת מגילה דף כה עמוד ב-משום ישא - שלא יאמרו: הקדוש ברוך הוא נושא להן פנים, ואינן יודעין שכדאי הן ישראל לשאת להן פנים, כדאמרינן בברכות (ב, ב): לא כדאי הם ישראל לשאת להן פנים אני אמרתי ואכלת ושבעת וברכת (דברים ח) והן מחמירין על עצמן עד כזית עד כביצה.

Rashi explains that the words were not translated into Aramaic because non-Jews may hear it and resent that we ask G-d to favor the Jewish people. Rashi's explanation helps explain the position of the Match Moshe as to why Birchat Kohanim should not be recited in front of non-Jews; so that the non-Jews will not resent the fact that we ask G-d to favor us.

2. The use of the word: משולשת to describe ברכת כהנים may have been an attempt by חז"ל to draw a parallel between ברכת כהנים and קדושה. This bolsters our argument that the opening three ברכות and the closing three ברכות parallel each other.

SUPPLEMENT

כהונה THE HISTORY OF THE

Our study of the history of ברכת כהנים has opened a door to the study of the history of the כהונה. It is a subject in which anyone with the last name of "Katz" might have a personal interest. Let us begin to approach this matter by asking a question that relates to תפלה. How is it that a group that was so involved in the עבודה that took place in the בית המקדש is not identified at all as playing a role in עבודה שבלב? And there is a much broader question. The following sources identify the כהנים as the teachers of תורה and as בעלי הוראה. How is it that כהנים play no role as teachers or בעלי הוראה from the time of the גמרא forward in time?

דברים פרק לג פסוק י-יורו משפטיך ליעקב ותורתך לישראל ישימו קטורה באפך וכליל על מזבחך:

מלאכי פרק ב-כי שפתי כהן ישמרו דעת ותורה יבקשו מפיהו כי מלאך ה' צב-אות הוא: דש"י - מלאכי פרק ב פסוק ז-י שפתי כהן - עליהם מוטל לשמור דעת למה שהרי תורה יבקשו מפיה שכבר דבר זה מסור להם יורו משפטיך ליעקב (דברים ל"ג): מצודת דוד - מלאכי פרק ב פסוק ז-כי שפתי הכהן - ר"ל הנה כל זה ראוי לכל כהן כי שפתי כהן ראויים שישמרו את הדעת לדבר בם והראוי הוא שכל בני ישראל יבקשו תורה מפיהו ושהוא ילמדם: כי מלאך - כי הוא שלוהו של מקום להורותם הדרך הישר וכמ"ש וללוי אמר וגו' יורו משפטיך ליעקב (דברים לג):

הושע פרק ד פסוק ו-נדמו עמי מבלי הדעת כי אתה הדעת מאסת ואמאסך מכהן לי ותשכח תורת אלהיך אשכח בניך גם אני: מצודת דוד הושע פרק ד פסוק ו -כי אתה - על הכהן ללמד כמ"ש כי שפתי כהן ישמרו דעת ותורה יבקשו מפיהו (מלאכי ב) ולכן אמר הואיל ואתה הכהן מאסת את הדעת ולא למדת את העם לכן גם אני אמאס אותך מלכהן לי: אבן עזרא הושע פרק ד פסוק ו-כי אתה הדעת מאסת ואמאסך מכהן לי ותשכח תורת אלקיך - הטעם כפול כי אתה הדעת מאסתה כי לכהן ניתנה התורה ועוד כי הם השופטים כי שפתי כהן ישמרו דעת:

יחזקאל פרק ז פסוק כו – הוה על־הוה תבוא ושמעה אל־שמועה תהיה ובקשו חזון מנביא ותורה תאבד מכהן ועצה מזקנים:
 מצודת דוד יחזקאל פרק ז פסוק כו – מכהן – כי על הכהן להורות וכמ"ש כי שפתי כהן ישמרו דעת ותורה יבקשו מפיהו (מלאכי ב):

The follow represents a further introduction into when and why כהנים lost their role in Jewish learning. It is an excerpt from the book: *From Tradition to Commentary: Torah and Its Interpretation in the Midrash Sifre to Deuteronomy*, by Steven D. Fraade; State University of New York Press, 1991

page 72-It is often suggested that by the time the Second Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E. its replacement by the Pharisaic-rabbinic sages and their "democratizing" program of lay Torah teaching and study had been long in preparation. These sages, it is argued, had already articulated and organized an alternative to the Temple worship and its priestly oligarchy, had won widespread popular support for their program, and now simply moved from side stage to center stage with the exit of the obsolete sacrificial system and its priestly supporters. Other groups that had previously challenged the legitimacy of the Jerusalem priesthood but on the grounds of an alternative priestly leadership or ideology (e.g., the Qumran sectaries) likewise found themselves suddenly without ground to stand on and quickly left the scene, leaving the nascent rabbinic movement without competition for national leadership.

The evidence that I have presented elsewhere suggests that this conventional picture is problematic as it views the late Second Temple period and the aftermath of the Temple's destruction largely through the eyes of third century -- if not later -- rabbinic texts. The extant Second Temple evidence suggests, rather, that at least until 70 C.E. scribal authority, both didactic and judicial, for Israel's Scriptures and laws remained mainly in priestly hands, and when that authority was delegated downward it was to quasi-priests (e.g., Levites) or to others associated with the priests (e.g., Pharisees). Similarly, those who had questioned or denied the legitimacy of the officiating Jerusalem priesthood of their time could not conceive of anything other than a priestly "constitution" for the Jewish people.

Although the destruction of the Temple meant the end of a centralized sacrificial cult, it should not be assumed, as is often done, that the priesthood's social status and claims to be the authentic guardians and interpreters of Israel's Scriptures and laws, rooted as these both were in Scripture and in a long history, necessarily terminated, thereby creating a complete leadership vacuum. This is not to minimize the political, religious, and social trauma and dislocation caused by the destruction of the Temple, but to suggest that it need not have meant the sudden end of the paramount position of the priesthood as Israel began to reconstitute its life without a Temple, especially as long as

Jerusalem remained accessible and hopes for the rebuilding of its Temple remained alive (in both cases until 135 C.E.). The example of the Samaritans, who maintained (and continue to maintain until this day) the religious, social, and intellectual paramountcy of their priesthood long after their temple was destroyed in the late second century B.C.E. suggests that a similar possibility for the Jews should not be dismissed out of hand. In fact, several kinds of evidence suggest that priestly status, and perhaps authority, continued to be a factor in Jewish communal life long after 70 C.E.

How long priestly authority continued in noncultic realms of public life and how long it took for the nascent rabbinic movement to establish itself as the new national leadership is impossible to say, because we have very little direct evidence from the period between 70 and 200 C.E. and because our first documents, rabbinic texts of the third century such as the Sifre, come from the rabbinic "victors." As I have already suggested, the extent to which rabbinic portrayals of earlier times can be taken as historically representational is a serious and complex question. But we may also ask whether we can assume that these texts are at least directly symptomatic of social conditions at the time of their redaction, which is to ask whether, in fact, the rabbis were already at that time the "victors," or whether the religious and social transformation that eventually established the rabbis as the successors to the priests as the national leadership was still in progress. If the latter, then these texts, when viewed in the historical context of the time of their creation, might be seen not so much as reports of a transformation already completed as part of the very work of that transformation -- as the discursive media of their will to socioreligious power and its self-justification.

A cardinal rule of critical historiography is that the stories of the past that our sources permit us to tell may not be those we would most like to tell or others would have us tell. In this chapter I shall gather a wide array of commentary texts from the Sifre that both in their topics and in their discursive practices touch upon, whether explicitly or implicitly, the rabbinic sage and his Torah and the relation of each to its biblical antecedents as well as to the sociohistorical situation of third century Palestine. The critical history of the sage much before the creation of such commentary in the early third century is, unfortunately, one that our extant sources and present critical tools do not permit us to recount.

The Sifre is especially interesting in this regard because the Book of Deuteronomy to which it provides the earliest extant commentary is the most didactic of the books of the Pentateuch -- in its rhetorical style, in its narrative framework, and in its frequent admonitions to Israel to teach and learn God's words. Narratively set on the eve of Moses' passing from leadership, it is particularly concerned with designating institutions for the continued transmission and adjudication of God's word in Israel's social midst. But the Book of Deuteronomy is also the most explicit of the books of the Pentateuch in stressing the role of the priests, here being the descendants of Levi, as the

authoritative teachers of God's revelation and as the judicial authorities for the implementation of Israel's covenantal laws. Deuteronomy, thus, presents the early rabbinic exegetes and the redactors of the Sifre with numerous opportunities to assert the importance of study of Torah as a central religious obligation upon which Israel's covenantal fortunes rest, while challenging them to express their claims to be the paramount authorities in matters of Scripture and Jewish law in exegetical engagement with a biblical text that associates that authority with the hereditary priesthood. This is a challenge to advance the rabbinic work of collective self-representation and legitimization in engagement with a scriptural text that, perhaps like social reality, offered some resistance to that work.

Professor Fraade in one of his footnotes presents additional sources on this subject:

For evidence for the continued importance and influence of the priesthood in Palestine long after the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., and therefore for its continued impact on rabbinic self-understanding, see the following: Reuven Kimelman, "The Conflict between the Priestly Oligarchy and the Sages in the Talmudic Period", *Zion* 48 (1983): 135-48 [Hebrew]; Stuart S. Miller, *Studies in the History and Translations of Sepphoris*, *SJLA* 37 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984), pp. 103-132; Dalia Ben-Hayim Trifon, "The Priests After the Destruction of the Second Temple", (Ph.D. diss., Tel-Aviv University, 1985) [Hebrew]; Isaiah Gafni, "Scepter and Staff: Concerning New Forms of Leadership in the Period of the Talmud in the Land of Israel and Babylonia", in *Kehaunnâ ûmeBlûkâ: ya?šê dat ûmedînâ beyieBa?el ûba?ammîm*, ed. I. Gafni and G. Motzkin (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 1986-87), pp. 79-91 [Hebrew]; David Goodblatt, "Yehûda ?ere?-yûra?el baššanîm 70-132", in *Hahus?ryâ šel uam yisra?sl: wsrôma -- msrîdôt hayyshûdîm*, ed. Uriel Rappaport (Jerusalem: Alexander Peli, 1983-84), pp. 162-165. Note as well the prominence of "Eleazar the Priest" on the rebel coins from the Bar Kokhba caves sixty-five years after the destruction of the Temple. This Eleazar, whatever his identity, was presumably the religious leader of the revolt, second only to Bar Kokhba the "Prince." For details see Leo Mildenberg, "The Eleazar Coins of the Bar Kochba Rebellion", *Historia Judaica* 11 (1949): 77-108. Archeological evidence, in the form of synagogue inscriptions, also indicates that those of priestly descent continued to keep records of (and perhaps to commemorate) their weeks of service (*mišmarôt*) in the Temple for centuries after its destruction. See Joseph Naveh, *On Stone and Mosaic; The Aramaic and Hebrew Inscriptions from Ancient Synagogues* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1978), nos. 51 (Caesarea), 52 (Ashkalon), 56 (near Gaza), 106 (Yemen) [Hebrew]; and Ephraim E. Urbach, in *Tarbiz* 42 (1972-73): 304-309. Note also the prominently inscribed "Samoe (?), priest and sophodidaskalos (teacher of wisdom)" in the synagogue at Sardis (5th century C.E.). See *BASOR* 187 (October 1967): 23 (fig. 48), 29,38.

בעזרת ה', we will return to this subject from time to time. One closing thought. It was the כהנים who gave birth to two groups; the צדוקים and the פרושים. The כהנים were also the חשמונאים who were criticized by חז"ל for usurping כתר מלכות. As we have seen, the usurpation of כתר מלכות resulted in הרבן בית שני. The result may be that the כהנים lost their moral standing in the community and were no longer looked upon for religious leadership. Into that vacuum stepped the תנאים and the אמוראים. The fact that the כהנים are left out of the following statement of the chain of מסורה is quite revealing:

משה קבל תורה מסיני, ומסרה ליהושע, ויהושע לזקנים, וזקנים לנביאים, ונביאים מסרה לאנשי כנסת הגדולה.