

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Jewish Prayer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Lesson One:	The Origin Of The Synagogue	p.	2
Lesson Two:	Introduction To Individual Prayer	p.	12
Lesson Three:	Introduction To Communal Prayer	p.	22
Lesson Four:	The Purpose Of The Torah Reading	p.	30

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
The Origin Of The Synagogue

Summary Of Lecture: The institution of the synagogue is not mentioned in the Bible. It may have developed as the result of another institution which is referred to in the Bible known as the city gates. That is the theory put forth by Professor Lee Levine, formerly at Yale University and now at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel, in his book, *The Ancient Synagogue*, Yale University Press, 2000.

The Bible describes the following activities taking place at the city gates: real estate transactions, political decisions, criminal court proceedings including the carrying out of sentences and court cases involving marital issues. In addition, the earliest record of a public reading of the Torah took place at a city gate.

The city gates also served as the location for early markets. Evidence exists that many early markets included a religious institution. It was hoped that the local deity would bring peace and prosperity to those participating in the market.

These activities share in common the need to have the largest number of people participate or to learn of an event. Since the city gates represented a central area with a large amount of foot traffic, those goals could be reached when an activity took place there.

It appears from the various uses of the city gates that the synagogue as we know it today began as a place where the Torah was read publicly. Over time, other activities such as communal prayer and the reading of the prophets were added to the public reading of the Torah. Once the Second Temple was destroyed, the focus of service to G-d in the Jewish religion was transferred from the Temple to the synagogue.

*Class Presented By Abe Katz, Founding Director,
The Beurei Hatefila Institute-www.beureihatefila.com*

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
The Origin Of The Synagogue

Real Estate Transactions Took Place At The City-Gates

The Bible tells us that our forefather Abraham bought a burial plot for his wife, our foremother, Sarah. The transaction by which Abraham paid for the plot took place at the city gates:

Bereishis 23, 10-And Ephron lived among the Hittites. Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham within the hearing range of the Hittites, all of whom were gathered at the gate of his city, saying.
Bereishis 23, 18- To Abraham, as property purchased, in the presence of the Hittites, those of whom were gathered at the gate of his city.

Political Decisions Were Made At The City Gate

Bereishis 34, 20-And Hamor and Shechem, his son, came to the gate of their city and spoke with the men of their city, saying.
Bereishis 34, 24- And to Hamor and to Shechem, his son, listened all who went in and out from the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all who went in and out of the gate of his city.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
The Origin Of The Synagogue

Criminal Cases Were Heard And Decided And Sentences Were
Carried Out At The City Gate

Devarim 21, 19-Then shall his father and his mother lay hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city and to the gate of his place;

Devarim 22, 24- Then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city. You shall then stone them with stones until they perish; the woman, because she did not cry out, being in the city; and the man, because he violated his neighbor's wife; in order that you discourage the performance of evil from among you.

Joshua 20, 4-And He shall flee to one of those cities. He shall then stand at the entrance of the gate of the city, and shall explain his circumstances to the elders of that city. The elders then shall invite him into the city and provide him a place so that he may live among them.

Marital Issues Were Resolved Were Resolved At The City Gate

Ruth 4,1-Then Boaz went up to the gate, and sat down there. Behold, the next of kin of whom Boaz had spoken came by to whom he said: Hey there, Mr. so and so; turn aside, sit down here. He then turned aside and sat down.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
The Origin Of The Synagogue

The First Recorded Example Of The Public Reading Of The
Torah Took Place At A City Gate

Nehemia 8,1- And all the people gathered as one man in the open place before the Water Gate and they asked Ezra the Scribe to retrieve the Torah scroll of Moshe, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. 2. And Ezra the Priest brought the Torah before the congregation, consisting both of men and women, and all who could understand its contents, on the first day of the seventh month. 3. And Ezra read from it in front of the open space before the Water Gate, from early morning until noon, before the men and the women, and those who could understand; and within sound of all the people who were attentive to the book of the Torah. 4. And Ezra the Scribe stood upon a platform of wood, which had been made for this purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Uriah, and Hilkiyah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiyah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. 5. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up; 6. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great G-d. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. 7. Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiyah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiyah, and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Torah; while the people stood in their places. 8. So they read in the book in the Torah of G-d clearly, and provided its interpretation, so that all present understood the reading.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
The Origin Of The Synagogue

The Requirement To Publicize An Act

Why does Judaism require the presence of ten men for the performance of some religious acts while for others it requires a smaller number?

It therefore appears to me that I need to differentiate between the various circumstances. When a matter concerns the Jewish public in general and needs to be publicized to all Jews, then ten men must be present for the act to be considered a public act. Doing the same before three men might also be considered publicizing, but you will not be confident that the publicizing before the three men will cause the message to be delivered to the greater Jewish public. However concerning a personal matter, involving one individual, publicizing in front of three is sufficient. In that case we are not concerned as to whether the information will reach the general Jewish public. It appears to me that in all matters that involve the public at large, our Sages tried to find the means of publicizing that would reach the greatest number of people. That is what was meant in Maseches Menachos that the publicizing that took place before ten men was performed in the marketplace because the marketplace is the place where you can obtain the greatest maximum publicity. Based on this concept, we can reconcile all the parts of the Gemara that we cited. The publicizing of a matter that concerns the greater Jewish public must be done in front of ten men but the publicizing of a matter that concerns an individual can be done in front of three men.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
The Origin Of The Synagogue

The Need To Read The Torah At A Public Place

The glorification of G-d is increased by the number of people present.

The High Priest would read from the Torah on Yom Kippur:

Maseches Yuma Chapter 7, Mishnah 1. The high priest then came to read. If he wished to read in linen garments he could do so, otherwise he would read in his own white vestments. The synagogue attendant would take a scroll of the law and give it to the head of the synagogue and the head of the synagogue gave it to the second one in command, and the second one in command gave it to the high priest, and the high priest stands and receives it, and reads the section beginning 'after the death . . . ' (Va'Yikra 16) and 'howbeit on the tenth. . . ' (Va'Yikra 23, 26-32), then he would roll up the scroll of the law and put it in his bosom and say, 'more than what I have read out before you is written here. and on the tenth . . . ' (Bamidbar 29, 7-11) which is in the book of Bamidbar he recites by heart. He then recites in connection therewith eight Brachos: for the law, for the temple service, for the thanksgiving, for the forgiveness of sins and for the temple separately, and for Israel separately and for Jerusalem separately, for the Kohanim separately and for the rest of the prayer.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
The Origin Of The Synagogue

On Fast Days, The Ark Carrying The Torah Would Be Taken Out Into The Street:

Maseches Taanis, Chapter 2, Mishnah 1- What is the order of the service for fast days? The ark is taken out to the open space of the city, wood ashes are placed on the ark, on the head of the Nasi and on the head of the ab-beth-din. Everyone else puts ashes on his own head; the elder among them addresses them with words of admonition to repentance: thus, our brethren, scripture does not say of the people of Nineveh, and G-d saw their sackcloth and their fasting, but, and G-d saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and in the prophets it is said, and rend your heart and not your garments.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
The Origin Of The Synagogue

Mondays And Thursdays As Days Of Gathering

Why Mondays And Thursdays Were Chosen As Market Days?

Relationship Between Market Days And Torah Reading

An Ancient Economic History: From the Palaeolithic Age to the Migrations of the Germanic, Slavic and Arabic Nations Vol. 1 by Fritz M. Heichelheim, Joyce Stevens; A.W. Sijthoff, 1957 p. 248:

Regular market days developed in Greece and Italy during the 7th and 6th centuries B.C. at the latest. Originally markets were held, as we have seen already, in the *agora*, a free place destined for political gatherings and religious festivals of the polis by ancient traditions. The Odyssey already describes, for the *agora* of the Phaeacians, economic and non-economic use in a probably late passage. Markets were of course most frequent in coastal towns and were often connected with some temple, the god of which was to guarantee the peace during market gatherings.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
The Origin Of The Synagogue

Advancing The Date On Which the Megila of Esther Was Read:

Maseches Megila, Chapter 1, Mishnah 1- Circumstances can lead to Megilas Esther can be read on the eleventh, the twelfth, the thirteenth, the fourteenth, and the fifteenth of Adar, never earlier and never later. Cities which have been walled since the days of Yehoshua son of Nun read on the fifteenth; villages and large towns read on the fourteenth. the villages, however, may sometimes push the reading forward to the market day.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
The Origin Of The Synagogue

Theodotos Inscription

“Theodotus, (son) of Vettenus, priest and archisynagogos (ruler of the synagogue), son of an archisynagogos, grandson of an archisynagogos, built the synagogue for the reading of the law and the teaching of the commandments, and the guest-chamber and the rooms and the water installations for lodging for those needing them from abroad, which his fathers, the elders and Simonides founded.”

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Individual Prayer

Questions:

1. Is prayer meant to benefit Man or benefit G-d?
2. Is prayer a right or a privilege?
3. Does G-d answer all prayers?
4. Why pray using a fixed text?

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Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Individual Prayer

Question: Is prayer meant to benefit Man or to benefit G-d?

Initially animal sacrifices were viewed as the manner in which Man serves G-d. What does it mean to serve G-d? It can be compared to being a “fan.” A fan can be described as someone who wants to know all he can about his idol. Jews are not “fans” of idols. Jews are “fans” of G-d. To demonstrate our loyalty to G-d, G-d demanded that the Jewish people bring a morning animal sacrifice and an identical sacrifice in the afternoon. Those two sacrifices were known as the Korban “Tamid.” The word “Tamid” means always. In the context of sacrifices, the two daily sacrifices were brought every day no matter if the day was a holiday. Once the Second Temple was destroyed, our sages needed to find a substitute for the two daily mandatory sacrifices. They found that substitute in the fixed prayers. As a result, our recital of the fixed text is our “Korban Tamid”; our way of demonstrating our allegiance as fans of G-d.

Notwithstanding the daily sacrifices in the Temple and the fixed prayers that replaced those sacrifices, personal prayers were always welcomed and encouraged.

Question: Is prayer a right or a privilege?

Judaism believes that man does not have a right to pray to G-d. The privilege of approaching G-d in prayer was granted to man in the merit of the forefathers of the Jewish People, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Each of those is credited with instituting the practice of serving G-d through prayer at different times of the day. Abraham started the morning prayer service. Isaac instituted the afternoon service and Jacob instituted the night service. That is why the primary fixed prayer, known as Shemona Esrei, the prayer of 18 benedictions begins with a reference to those forefathers.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Individual Prayer

Question: Does G-d answer all prayers?

This is what Jakob J. Petuchowski, writes on page 40 of the book: Understanding Jewish Prayer:

Put differently, the same thought may be expressed by saying that G-d's "answer" to man's prayer need not invariably be an affirmative answer. G-d must also be thought capable of saying "No." Perhaps this is indeed the difference between engaging in magic and engaging in prayer. Magic, by definition, *must* work. If it does not yield results, then, in the view of the practitioner of magic, something must have gone wrong with the performance of the magical rite; and he will repeat the rite in a more careful and meticulous manner. Prayer, on the other hand, is addressed to a G-d who has a will and a mind of His own. G-d cannot be manipulated by man. He can only be *addressed*. He may, or may not grant a specific request. But there is no mechanism of man's devising which could compel Him to do so. In addressing G-d, man knows that a "No" can be as much of an "answer" as a "Yes."

Question: Why pray using a fixed text?

This is what Jakob J. Petuchowski, writes on page 24 of the book: Prayerbook Reform In Europe:

The fixed times of prayer, he says, are part of "the order of the divine will." They are an immeasurable aid to us when we are in no mood to pray, and by thus forcing oneself to pray he may be saved from the danger of losing the ability to pray altogether. Again, the fixed liturgy may admittedly be nothing more than a makeshift arrangement. Ideally, perhaps, man should pray in his own words, and the liturgical formulae were fixed only when, because of the Exile, men had lost the art of spontaneous prayer. But that is only part of the story. If reciting the words of the liturgy is a "prayer of empathy" (man deriving inspiration from the words on the page in front of him), and is thus contrasted with the prayer of "self expression," we ought to remember that even in the latter, man is making use of words and words are by nature external. Why not, then, use the words which have proved to be efficacious by millennial use?

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Individual Prayer

Six Forms Of Jewish Prayer

1. Spontaneous prayer;
2. Prayer in times of difficulty;
3. The fixed prayers (the Siddur);
4. Personal prayers that are added to the fixed prayers;
5. Non-verbal acts of prayer-sitting, standing, bowing, Shofar blowing, etc.
6. Vows.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Individual Prayer

Spontaneous prayer

Maimonides-It is a positive commandment to pray each day as it is written: and you shall serve G-d. From divine inspiration, they taught that service is prayer as it is written: And to serve Him with all your hearts. Our sages said: what is service of the heart? That is prayer. And the number of prayers to pray each day is not decreed by the Torah; and the wording of the prayers is not decreed by the Torah and the Torah does not set forth a set time each day for prayer.

Therefore, women and slaves are obligated to perform the mitzvah of praying because it is a positive commandment that does not have a fixed time but the way to perform this obligation is in this way: that a person should supplicate and pray each day and should state the praise of G-d and then should ask for his needs that he needs by request and by supplicating and then should give praise and thanks to G-d for the good that G-d bears to him, everyone according to his ability.

If he was accustomed to praying, he should say much supplication and requests. But if he had difficulty expressing himself, he should speak to the best of his ability and whenever he could and the number of times he prays should be according to his ability. There were those who prayed once a day; there were those who prayed several times a day. Everyone should pray facing towards the Holy Temple no matter where he is situated. And that is the way things were from the time of Moses to the time of Ezra.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Individual Prayer

Prayer in times of difficulty

Nachmanides-That which was taught in the Midrash Sifrei that the words to serve G-d represent study or prayer did not consist of a commandment but consisted of good advice or to indicate that as part of the requirement to serve G-d we should study Torah or pray to G-d in times of trouble; that our eyes and hearts should be pointed towards G-d in the same manner that servants turn to their masters . This is in line with what we learned (Bamidbar 10, 9): And if you go to war in your land against an enemy who oppresses you, then you shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and you shall be remembered before the Lord your G-d, and you shall be saved from your enemies. This verse represents the Mitzvah to cry out to G-d in prayer and with Shofar blowing each and every time the Jewish community is faced with difficulties. This was further explained by King Solomon: (Melachim 1, 8, 35, 37-38): When heaven is closed, and there is no rain, etc., If there is in the land famine, if there is pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there is caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatever plague, whatever sickness there might be; Whatever prayer and supplication is made by any man, or by all your people Israel, who shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread out his hands toward this house.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Individual Prayer

The Fixed Prayers, The Prayer Of 18 (19) Benedictions

Maimonides-After the Jews were forced into exile by Nebechednezzar the evil one (destruction of first Temple), Jews mingle with the Persians and Greeks and other nations and they gave birth to children in the Nations of the non-Jews. These children found that their spoken language was a combination of many spoken languages. When they would speak, they could not express their whole thought in one language except as a mixture of languages as we learn in Nehemia chapter 13 verse 24: and their children speak half Ashdodite and they did not know how to speak Hebrew. They speak the language of each nation. Therefore when one of them wishes to pray he runs short of Hebrew words with which to ask his needs or to praise G-d in Hebrew and ends up mixing words from other languages. When Ezra and his court noticed this issue, they authored the 18 blessings (shemona esrei) in order; the first three blessings that contain praise of G-d; the last three blessings that contain thanks to G-d; and the middle ones that contain requests for personal needs and communal needs. By establishing the text of the blessings, everyone said the blessings in the same order. As a result, they will study the blessings. The prayers of those who might stammer becomes a complete prayer like the prayer of those who have a strong command of the Hebrew language. And for this reason, they authored all the blessings and prayers so that the blessings and the prayers would be the same text for all so that each blessing would be said correctly even by those who stammer.

Personal prayers that are added to the fixed prayers

At what point in the fixed prayers should personal prayers be inserted. It depends on your view of the fixed prayers- Is prayer meant to benefit Man or to benefit G-d?

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Individual Prayer

Non-Verbal Acts Of Prayer

Professor Uri Ehrlich-The Non-Verbal Language Of Jewish Prayer

Table of Contents:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. The Standing Posture | 6. Exiting From Prayer |
| 2. Bowing | 7. Attire |
| 3. Orientation: The Face | 8. Shoes |
| 4. Orientation: The Eyes | 9. Voice |
| 5. Hands | 10. Gestures |

Professor Urlich may have omitted what is the most important non-verbal aspect of prayer; i.e. who we are. It is improper for us to think that G-d's decision on whether he should respond to our prayer is based on how we act in synagogue. From G-d's perspective, it is how we act outside of the synagogue, in our personal lives and in our professional lives, that determines whether G-d will respond to our prayers.

Avudrohom-The meaning of the words: "we do not know what else to do" is as follows: In the morning prayer service, we performed several non-verbal acts of prayer similar to the non-verbal acts of prayer that Moshe Rabbenu performed when he climbed Mount Sinai and he received the Torah. Moshe Rabbenu relates that at first he sat on the mountain using the Hebrew word that means sitting and then he says that "I stood on the mountain." And then he relates that he fell on his face before G-d. We conduct ourselves in a similar manner. We recite Pseukei D'Zimra in a seated position; then we stand for Shemona Esrei and then we fall on our faces as part of tachanun. That is why we then say: we do not know what else we can do.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Individual Prayer

Vows-1

In modern times, vows appear to play a very small role in Jewish prayer. But perhaps it would be better to characterize them as an inadvertent form of prayer. In other words, people still make vows in the form of a prayer but fail to remember that they uttered the vow. For example, if someone hears that a family member has taken ill, we can picture the person saying: please G-d, deliver a cure to X and I will never talk back to him/her. The person then recovers from the illness while the one who made the vow forgets what he had promised.

Vows in the Bible:

Bereishis 28, 20- And Jacob uttered a vow in which he promised: If G-d remains with me, and guards me while I am on the path that I am about to follow and provides me bread to eat and clothes to wear, 21. So that I can return to my father's house whole, then the Lord shall be my G-d.

Bereishis 31, 13- I am the G-d you approached in Beth-El, where you anointed the pillar, and where you issued a vow to Me, now arise, leave this land, and return to the land of your family.

The Bible reminds us of the significance of uttering vows:

Bamidbar 30,3-If a man issues a vow to the Lord or swears an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Individual Prayer

Vows-2

Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, in her book: *Genesis, The Beginning of Desire*, JPS, 1995, writes about the dangers of not fulfilling vows in a timely manner:

The main statement of the midrash is, of course, that the making of a vow creates a sacred, dangerous reality. To delay fulfilling a vow is not so much a moral issue as it is a question of disturbing an essential balance. Like going on a journey, unaccompanied, or sitting in a house that is about to collapse, the unfulfilled vow suggests a state of disequilibrium: the whole structure may collapse around one's ears, the forces of chaos are free to attack, one has exposed oneself to the baneful stare of the accusing angels.

While solitary journeys and dilapidated houses are obviously dangerous, however, the peculiar peril of the unfulfilled vow needs some clarification. It is as though one has enjoyed a special kind of oral pleasure, as in the quotation from Proverbs: one has eaten of the sacred, of the animals set aside for ritual purposes. To vow is to break a rational limitation, a clear boundary between hand and mouth, as another midrash puts it: "Let your hand [the fulfillment of your vow] be close to your mouth. The Sages said: Let your hand be *in front* of your mouth -- that is, hold the object to be vowed, ready in your hand, *before* uttering vows." If the mouth is not underwritten, as it were, by the hand, if words correspond to nothing, then one finds that one has created a reality-that-is-not-reality.

Language has the power to create such marginal -- sacred and dangerous -- realities. In making a vow, one constructs an image of an intended future, and thereby opens a Pandora's box of conflicts and resistances, of hitherto hidden fears and fantasies: the ledger of one's inner being, in the imagery of the midrash, is exposed to searching angelic gaze. The unbalanced books are audited, and one may find, even if only in subconscious form, the three cardinal sins traced within. The gap between hand and mouth is a perilous space; by bringing trouble after trouble upon him, G-d tries to make Jacob aware of the need to close the gap. But Jacob does not pay attention: he is insensitive to the implications of catastrophe, to the single message encoded in the many blows that rain down on him.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Communal Prayer

Questions:

What Is The Definition Of Communal Prayer?

Why Do We Need Ten People To Conduct Communal Prayer?

Why Was Communal Prayer Established?

What Are We Permitted To Do While Praying In A Group Of At Least Ten People That We May Not Do While Praying Alone?

Why Pray In A Group Of Ten People And Not Pray Alone? What Are The Benefits Of Communal Prayer? What Are The Benefits Of Praying Alone?

Is Our Conduct In Synagogue Different Than The Temple Service Or Consistent With It?

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Communal Prayer

What We Do In Synagogue That We May Not Do When Praying Alone:

1. Reading Of The Torah
2. Recital Of Kaddish
3. Responsive Prayers
4. Repetition Of The Prayer Of 18 Benedictions
(Shemona Esrei)
5. We Follow A Fixed Text And Recite The Prayers In Order

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Communal Prayer

Question: What does the Jewish Prayer Book, the Siddur, represent?

Seder Rav Amrom Gaon-The order of prayers and Brachos for the entire year that you requested, that has been shown to us by Heaven, we deem appropriate to set forth and lay out in the manner in which the tradition was passed down to us, as compiled by the Rabbis during the period of the Mishna and of the Gemara. And so we learned: Rabbi Mayer said: a person is obligated to recite 100 Brachos each day. In the Jerusalem Talmud we learned: it was taught in the name of Rabbi Mayer; there is no Jew who does not fulfill one hundred Mitzvos each day, as it was written: Now Israel, what does G-d your G-d ask of you? Do not read the verse as providing for the word: “what” (Mah); instead read it as including the word: “one hundred” (Mai’Eh). King David established the practice of reciting one hundred Brachos each day. When the residents of Jerusalem informed him that one hundred Jews were dying everyday, he established this requirement. It appears that the practice was forgotten until our Sages at the time of the Mishna and at the time of the Gemara re-established it. The order of the 100 Brachos was set forth by Rav Natroni son of Hil’Ai, head of the Yeshiva at Masa Machsiya, in correspondence with the community in Lucena, Spain through Rav Yosef, the elder.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Communal Prayer

Why Pray In A Group Of Ten People And Not Individually At Home?

- Because we want to recite responsive prayers like Kaddish;
- Because G-d always accepts the prayers of the many.;
- Because people fulfill their obligation for prayer by answering: Amen, אמן to the Brachos being recited by the prayer leader;
- Because of the principle of the King's glory is increased by the presence of the number of people.

Question: Is It Better To Pray In A Synagogue With Fewer People Or One With More People?

- Ten men who congregate and pray are viewed as causing the sanctification of G-d's name.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Communal Prayer

Shemona Esrei-Prayer Of 18 (19) Benedictions

Praise

1. Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d and G-d of our fathers, G-d of Abraham, G-d of Isaac and G-d of Jacob, the great, mighty and awesome G-d, exalted G-d, who bestows bountiful kindness, who creates all things, who remembers the piety of the Patriarchs, and who, in love, brings a redeemer to their children's children, for the sake of His Name. O King, (You are) a helper, a savior and a shield. Blessed are You L-rd, Shield of Abraham.
2. You are mighty forever, my L-rd; You resurrect the dead; You are powerful to save. He sustains the living with loving kindness, resurrects the dead with great mercy, supports the falling, heals the sick, releases the bound, and fulfills His trust to those who sleep in the dust. Who is like You, mighty One! And who can be compared to You, King, who brings death and restores life, and causes deliverance to spring forth! You are trustworthy to revive the dead. Blessed are You L-rd, who revives the dead.
3. You are holy and Your Name is holy, and holy beings praise You daily for all eternity. Blessed are You L-rd, the holy G-d.

Requests

4. You graciously bestow knowledge upon man and teach mortals understanding. Graciously bestow upon us from You, wisdom, understanding and knowledge. Blessed are You L-rd, who graciously bestows knowledge.
5. Cause us to return, our Father, to Your Torah; draw us near, our King, to Your service; and bring us back to You in whole-hearted repentance. Blessed are You L-rd, who desires penitence.
6. Pardon us, our Father, for we have sinned; forgive us, our King, for we have transgressed; for You are a good and forgiving G-d. Blessed are You L-rd, gracious One who pardons abundantly.
7. O behold our affliction and wage our battle; redeem us speedily for the sake of Your Name, for You G-d are the mighty redeemer. Blessed are You L-rd, Redeemer of Israel.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Communal Prayer

Shemona Esrei-Prayer Of 18 (19) Benedictions-Cont'

8. Heal us, O L-rd, and we will be healed; help us and we will be saved; for You are our praise. Grant complete cure and healing to all our wounds; for You, Almighty King, are a faithful and merciful healer. Blessed are You L-rd, who heals the sick of His people Israel.
9. Bless for us, L-rd our G-d, this year and all the varieties of its produce for good; and bestow (During the summer season say:) blessing (During the winter season say: dew and rain for blessing) upon the face of the earth. Satisfy us from Your bounty and bless our year like other good years, for blessing; for You are a generous G-d who bestows goodness and blesses the years. Blessed are You L-rd, who blesses the years.
10. Sound the great shofar for our freedom; raise a banner to gather our exiles, and bring us together from the four corners of the earth into our land. Blessed are You L-rd, who gathers the dispersed of His people Israel.
11. Restore our judges as in former times, and our counsellors as of yore; remove from us sorrow and sighing, and reign over us, You alone, O L-rd, with kindness and compassion, with righteousness and justice. Blessed are You L-rd, King who loves righteousness and justice.
12. Let there be no hope for informers, and may all the heretics and all the wicked instantly perish; may all the enemies of Your people be speedily extirpated; and may You swiftly uproot, break, crush and subdue the reign of wickedness speedily in our days. Blessed are You L-rd, who crushes enemies and subdues the wicked.
13. May Your mercies be aroused, L-rd our G-d, upon the righteous, upon the pious, upon the elders of Your people, the House of Israel, upon the remnant of their sages, upon the righteous proselytes and upon us. Grant ample reward to all who truly trust in Your Name, and place our lot among them; may we never be disgraced, for we have put our trust in You. Blessed are You L-rd, the support and security of the righteous.
14. Return in mercy to Jerusalem Your city and dwell therein as You have promised; speedily establish therein the throne of David Your servant, and rebuild it, soon in our days, as an everlasting edifice. Blessed are You L-rd, who rebuilds Jerusalem.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Communal Prayer

Shemona Esrei-Prayer Of 18 (19) Benedictions-Cont'

15. Speedily cause the scion of David Your servant to flourish, and increase his power by Your salvation, for we hope for Your salvation all day. Blessed are You L-rd, who causes the power of salvation to flourish.

16. Hear our voice, L-rd our G-d; merciful Father, have compassion upon us and accept our prayers in mercy and favor, for You are G-d who hears prayers and supplications; do not turn us away empty-handed from You, our King, for You hear the prayer of everyone. Blessed are You L-rd, who hears prayer.

17. Look with favor, L-rd our G-d, on Your people Israel and pay heed to their prayer; restore the service to Your Sanctuary and accept with love and favor Israel's fire-offerings and prayer; and may the service of Your people Israel always find favor. May our eyes behold Your return to Zion in mercy. Blessed are You L-rd, who restores His Divine Presence to Zion.

Thanksgiving

18. We thankfully acknowledge that You are the L-rd our G-d and G-d of our fathers forever. You are the strength of our life, the shield of our salvation in every generation. We will give thanks to You and recount Your praise, evening, morning and noon, for our lives which are committed into Your hand, for our souls which are entrusted to You, for Your miracles which are with us daily, and for Your continual wonders and beneficences. You are the Beneficent One, for Your mercies never cease; the Merciful One, for Your kindnesses never end; for we always place our hope in You. And for all these, may Your Name, our King, be continually blessed, exalted and extolled forever and all time. And all living things shall forever thank You, and praise Your great Name eternally, for You are good. G-d, You are our everlasting salvation and help, O benevolent G-d. Blessed are You L-rd, Beneficent is Your Name, and to You it is fitting to offer thanks.

19. Bestow peace, goodness and blessing, life, graciousness, kindness and mercy, upon us and upon all Your people Israel. Bless us, our Father, all of us as one, with the light of Your countenance. For by the light of Your countenance You gave us, L-rd our G-d, the Torah of life and loving-kindness, righteousness, blessing, mercy, life and peace. May it be favorable in Your eyes to bless Your people Israel, at all times and at every moment, with Your peace. Blessed are You L-rd, who blesses His people Israel with peace.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
Introduction To Communal Prayer

Shemona Esrei-Prayer Of 18 (19) Benedictions-Cont'

Personal Prayer

My G-d, guard my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceitfully. Let my soul be silent to those who curse me; let my soul be as dust to all. Open my heart to Your Torah, and let my soul eagerly pursue Your commandments. As for all those who plot evil against me, hasten to annul their counsel and frustrate their design. Let them be as chaff before the wind; let the angel of the L-rd thrust them away. That Your beloved ones may be delivered, help with Your right hand and answer me. Do it for the sake of Your Name; do it for the sake of Your right hand; do it for the sake of Your Torah; do it for the sake of Your holiness. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable before You, L-rd, my Strength and my Redeemer. He who makes peace in His heavens, may He make peace for us and for all Israel; and say, Amen.

May it be Your will, L-rd our G-d and G-d of our fathers, that the Bet Hamikdash (Temple in Jerusalem) be speedily rebuilt in our days, and grant us our portion in Your Torah.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
The Purpose Of The Torah Reading

Distinguishing Between The Sections Of The Prayer Service.

At What Point Does A Prayer Service End?

The Role Of Kaddish Tiskabel:

Accept The Prayers And Supplications Of The Entire Jewish People Being Recited Before Their Father In Heaven. Now Respond: Amen;

May There Be Abundant Peace From Heaven, and Life Upon Us And All Of The Jewish People. Now Respond: Amen.

*Class Presented By Abe Katz, Founding Director,
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Samuel Field Y Adult Center
The Purpose Of The Torah Reading

At What Point Does The Torah Reading Begin And End?

Prayers That Are Recited As The Torah Is Being Carried Away From The Ark:

May the Father of mercy have mercy on the nation that is persecuted, and may He remember the covenant with the Forefathers. May He rescue our souls from the difficult times, and cause the Evil Inclination to leave those borne by Him, graciously make us an eternal remnant, and fulfill our requests in good measure, for salvation and mercy.

The Prayers That Are Recited As The Torah Is Being Returned To The Ark.

Prayers That Recited During The Torah Reading Service.

Prayers For Those Who Receive An Aliya:

He who has blessed our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, may he bless (Hebrew name) in the merit of having stepped forward to read from the Torah whereby he honors the Omnipresent, the Torah and the Sabbath. In return, may the Holy One Blessed Be He, protect him and rescue him from every trouble and distress, from every plague and illness; and may G-d provide a blessing and success to his every endeavor and may that blessing be shared with all the Jewish People, his brothers. Now let us respond: Amen.

Prayer For The Sick:

He who has blessed our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, David and Solomon, may He bless and heal the sick person (patient's Hebrew name) son/daughter of (patient's mother's name) because his family will contribute charity on his behalf. In return, may the Holy One Blessed Be He, be filled with compassion for him, to strengthen him and to renew his health. And may He send him speedily a complete recovery from heaven for his two hundred forty eight organs and three hundred sixty five blood vessels among the other sick people of Israel, a recovery of the body and a recovery of the spirit, (and although making this request disturbs the quiet of the Sabbath, may a recovery come speedily) swiftly and soon. Now let us respond: Amen.

Prayer For A Mother And Her Newborn Child:

Naming Of A Baby Girl:

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
The Purpose Of The Torah Reading

Prayers That Are Recited While The Torah Scroll Is On The Reading Table:

Prayer For The Local Government:

He who delivers salvation unto kings and dominion unto princes, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, who delivered his servant David from the hurtful sword, who makes a way in the sea and a path in the mighty waters—may He bless, guard, protect, and help, exalt, magnify, and highly aggrandize THE CONSTITUTED OFFICERS OF THIS GOVERNMENT. May the Supreme King of Kings in His mercy preserve them in life and deliver them from all trouble and hurt. May the Supreme King of Kings in his mercy exalt them and raise them on high, and grant them a long and prosperous rule. May the Supreme King of Kings in his mercy inspire them and all their counsellors and officers with benevolence toward us, and all Israel our brethren. In their days and in ours may Judah be saved and Israel dwell securely; and may the redeemer come unto Zion. O that this may be His will, and let us say, 'Amen'.

Prayer For The New Month:

May it be Your will G-d, our G-d, and the G-d of our forefathers, that You inaugurate this month upon us for goodness and for blessing. May You give us long life, a life of peace, a life of goodness, a life of blessing, a life of sustenance, a life of physical health, a life in which there is fear of heaven and fear of sin, a life in which there is no shame or humiliation, a life of wealth and honor, a life in which we will have love of Torah and fear of heaven, a life in which our heartfelt requests will be fulfilled for the good, Amen.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
The Purpose Of The Torah Reading

Torah Reading As The Study Of Torah:

Mishnah. From what time may one recite the Shema in the morning? From the time that one can distinguish between the colors blue and white. R. Eliezer says: between the colors blue and green, and he has time to finish until sunrise. R. Joshua says: he has until the third hour of the day to complete the reading of Shema, for such is the custom of kings, to rise at the third hour. If one recites the Shema after the deadline to do so has passed he loses nothing because he is like one who reads in the Torah.

The Three Sections Of Kriyas Shema:

Devarim 6, 4 to 9;

Devarim 11, 13 to 21;

Bamidbar 15, 37-41.

What if a congregation does not have a Torah scroll from which to read, may they read from a Torah book?

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
The Purpose Of The Torah Reading

The Torah Reading As A Form Of Prayer-1

Rosh Hashonah:

Day 1: Bereishis 21:

1. And the Lord remembered Sarah as He had promised, and the Lord did to Sarah as he had spoken. 2. For Sarah conceived, and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which G-d had spoken to him. 3. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. 4. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as G-d had commanded him. 5. And Abraham was a hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born to him. 6. And Sarah said, G-d has made me laugh, so that all who hear will laugh with me. 7. And she said, Who would have said to Abraham, that Sarah should suckle children? For I have born him a son in his old age. 8. And the child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.

Day 2: Bereishis 22:

1. And it came to pass after these things, that G-d tested Abraham, and said to him, Abraham; and he said, Behold, here I am. 2. And He said, Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you. 3. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and broke the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went to the place of which G-d had told him. 4. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place far away. 5. And Abraham said to his young men, Stay here with the donkey; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come back to you. 6. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. 7. And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father, and said, My father; and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? 8. And Abraham said, My son, G-d will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering; so they went both of them together. 9. And they came to the place which G-d had told him; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. 10. And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. 11. And the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham; and he said, Here am I. 12. And he said, Lay not your hand upon the lad, nor do anything to him; for now I know that you fear G-d, seeing that you did not withheld your son, your only son from me. 13. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in place of his son.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
The Purpose Of The Torah Reading

The Torah Reading As A Form Of Prayer-2

On Fast Days: Shemos 32:

11. (After the sin of the Golden Calf) And Moses pleaded with the Lord his G-d, and said, Lord, why does your anger burn hot against Your people, whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? 12. If You carry out the sentence You wish to impose upon the Jewish People, You can expect the Egyptians to say: For an evil intent did G-d rescue the Jewish People, to slay them in the mountains, and to obliterate them from the face of the earth? Turn from Your fierce anger, and undertake no evil against Your people. 13. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, I will multiply your descendants so that they will be as plentiful as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever. 14. And the Lord cancelled the sentence that He had planned to impose upon His people.

Shemos 34-

1. And the Lord said to Moses, Cut two tablets of stone like the first; and I will write upon these tablets the words that were in the first tablets, which you broke. 2. And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to mount Sinai, and present yourself there to me in the top of the mount. 3. And no man shall come up with you, nor let any man be seen throughout all the mount; nor let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount. 4. And Moses cut two tablets of stone like to the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up to Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tablets of stone. 5. And the Lord descended in a cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. 6. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord G-d, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7. Showing mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, to the third and to the fourth generation. 8. And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. 9. And he said, If now I have found grace in your sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I beseech You, walk among us; for it is a stiff-necked people. Pardon our iniquity and our sin, and allow us to receive Your inheritance. 10. And G-d said, Behold, I make a covenant; before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among you shall see the work of the Lord; for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you.

Samuel Field Y Adult Center
The Purpose Of The Torah Reading

The Torah Reading As A Form Of Prayer-3

Tractate Rosh Hashonah 17b.-And ‘the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed [etc.]. R. Johanan said: Were it not written in the text, it would be impossible for us to say such a thing; this verse teaches us that the Holy One, blessed be He, drew His robe round Him like the leader of a congregation and showed Moses the order of prayer. He said to him: Whenever Israel sin, let them carry out this service before Me, and I will forgive them.

Responsa Of The Gaonim-: Our Sages taught (Rosh Hashonah 17b): an explanation had been conveyed that when G-d said to Moshe Rabbenu: I will call in the name of G-d, G-d in His glory appeared to Moshe. All Moshe could see was the outline of a man dressed as a prayer leader wrapped in a Talis standing before the ark, as it is written: and G-d crossed in front of Moshe. That figure then called out: Hashem, Hashem, Kail Rachum V’Chanun etc., Notzair Chesed L’Alaphim etc. Immediately Moshe rushed to prostrate himself on the ground and to bow. At that moment Moshe became aware that an order of Tefila had been presented to him by G-d from Heaven. That is the order of the Tefilos for a fast day that G-d imparted to Moshe from Heaven which should be followed by every Jewish community that finds itself in difficulty.

The Purpose Of The Torah Reading

Recreating The Giving Of The Torah At Mt. Sinai And The Acceptance Of It.

- a. The Torah Was Presented To The Jewish People But The Jewish People Needed To Accept The Torah In Order To Create The Covenant Between G-d And The Jewish People.
- b. Why Aliyot?
- c. Why call a minimum of a Kohain, a Levi and a Yisroel to read from the Torah?
- d. Why do we call a different number of people to the Torah on different days?
- e. The Bracha that is recited before and after an Aliya.
- f. Why women may be permitted to read from the Torah.
- g. Relationship between reader and the one receiving an Aliya.
- h. The prayer that Jews who follow the Moroccan order of the prayer service say the following:

I hereby accept upon myself the obligations of the Torah that was given to us by G-d through Moshe Rabbeinu. I hereby accept it anew with a complete and unconditional acceptance. This acceptance is done with my complete heart and all my soul and with all my possessions, with all 248 of my bones and 365 of my sinews. This acceptance is without even a shred of compulsion but is done with joy and with a good heart. This acceptance is in accordance with Rabbi Shimon son of Kohain, and his holy son Rabbi Lazar and in accordance with the holy King Yotam son of Oo'Ziyahu, the Holy One. My mouth is like their mouths; my acknowledgement is like their acknowledgement; my acceptance is like their acceptance and my intentions are like their intentions. By mentioning them, my wish is to include all of the Jewish people, individually and as a group. This acceptance should be upon me, upon my children, and my children's children, until the end of time, Amen.