



Source Materials
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① THANKSGIVING BLESSING (SIDUR)

THANKSGIVING BLESSING*

The following is recited by one who has survived a dangerous situation.

ברוך Blessed are You **HASHEM**, King of the universe, Who bestows good things upon the guilty, Who has bestowed every goodness upon me.

Congregation responds:

Amen. May He Who has bestowed goodness upon you continue to bestow every goodness upon you forever.

② TALMUD (BERACHOS 7a)

[7a] R. Johanan says in the name of R. Jose: How do we know that the Holy One, blessed be He, says prayers? Because it says: *Even them will I bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer.*⁵ It is not said, 'their prayer', but 'My prayer'; hence [you learn] that the Holy One, blessed be He, says prayers. What does He pray?—R. Zutra b. Tobi said in the name of Rab: 'May it be My will that My mercy may suppress My anger, and that My mercy may prevail over My [other] attributes, so that I may deal with My children in the attribute of mercy and, on their behalf, stop short of the limit of strict justice'.⁶ It was taught: R. Ishmael b. Elisha says: I once entered into the innermost part [of the Sanctuary] to offer incense and saw Akathriel [ah,⁷ the Lord of Hosts, seated upon a high and exalted throne. He said to me: Ishmael, My son, bless Me! I replied: May it be Thy will that Thy mercy may suppress Thy anger and Thy mercy may prevail over Thy other attributes, so that Thou mayest deal with Thy children according to the attribute of mercy and mayest, on their behalf, stop short of the limit of strict justice! And He nodded to me with His head. Here we learn [incidentally] that the blessing of an ordinary man must not be considered lightly in your eyes.]

③ MIDRASH (GENESIS 17:4)

4. AND OUT OF THE GROUND THE LORD GOD FORMED (WAYYZER) EVERY BEAST OF THE FIELD (II, 19). R. Johanan b. Zakkai was asked: Since it is already written, *Let the earth bring forth the living creature* (I, 24), what is taught by AND OUT OF THE GROUND THE LORD GOD FORMED? [He replied]: The earlier verse refers to creation, whereas this treats of gathering them together,¹ as you read, *When thou shalt mass (tazur) against a city a long time, in making war against it to take it* (Deut. xx, 19).² [R. Aḥa said: When the Holy One, blessed be He, came to create Adam, He took counsel with the ministering angels, saying to them, 'Let us make man' (I, 26). 'What will be the nature of this man?' they inquired. 'His wisdom will exceed yours,' He answered. What did the Lord do? He brought the animals, beasts, and birds before them and asked them, 'What should be the name of this?' but they did not know; 'of this?' and they did not know. Then He paraded them before Adam,³ and asked him, 'What is the name of this?' 'An ox.' 'And of this?' 'A camel.' 'And of this?' 'An ass.' 'And of this?' 'A horse.' Thus it is written, AND THE MAN GAVE NAMES TO ALL CATTLE, etc. (II, 20). Said He to him, 'And what is thy name?' 'It is fitting that I be called Adam, because I was created from the ground (*adamah*),' he replied. 'And what is My name?' 'It is fitting for Thee to be called *Adonai* (Lord), since Thou art Lord over all Thy creatures,' was the answer. R. Ḥiyya said: Thus it is written, *I am the Lord, that is My name* (Isa. XLII, 8), which means, That is My name by which Adam called Me.] Then he paraded them again before him in pairs, [male and female]. Said he, 'Every one has a partner, yet I have none': thus, BUT FOR ADAM THERE WAS NOT FOUND A HELP MEET FOR HIM! And why did He not create her for him at the beginning? Because the Holy One, blessed be He, foresaw that he would bring charges against her, therefore He did not create her until he expressly demanded her. But as soon as he did so, forthwith THE LORD GOD CAUSED A DEEP SLEEP TO FALL UPON THE MAN, AND HE SLEPT (II, 21).

④ TALMUD (YOMA 83b)

The Gemara cites another incident involving these Tannaim: רבי מאיר – And this is another incident that occurred when רבי מאיר, רבי יהודה ורבי יוסי קא אולי באורקא – R' Meir, R' Yehudah and R' Yose were traveling on the road. רבי מאיר הוה דניק בשמא – R' Meir would examine the name of the owner of the lodgings where they intended to stay,^[23] רבי יהודה ורבי יוסי לא הוו דניקו – but R' Yehudah and R' Yose would not examine his name. – When they came to a certain place, they asked for lodging, and they were given lodging. – They asked [the owner], “What is your name?” – He said to them, “Kidor.” – [R' Meir] said to himself, “Infer from this that he is a wicked man,” שניאמר. כי – as it is stated: *for they are a generation (kidor) of reversals, children in whom I have no trust.*^[24] רבי יהודה ורבי יוסי אשלימו ליה בייסיהו – R' Yehudah and R' Yose, who were not particular about names, entrusted their purses to him.^[25] רבי מאיר לא אשלים ליה בייסיהו – R' Meir, however, did not entrust his purse to him;^[26] – instead, he went and placed it by the grave of [his host's] father. אתחזי – That evening [the host's father] appeared to [the host] in a dream saying, תא שקיל ביטא דמנח ארישא דההוא גברא – “Come take the purse that is lying by the head of that person [i.e. by my head].” – למחר אמר להו הכי אתחזי לי בחלמאי – The next day, [the host] said to them, “This is what was revealed to me in my dream.” אמרי ליה חלמא דבי שמשי לית בהו – They^[27] said to him, “A dream of Friday evening has no substance.”^[28] רבי מאיר ונטריה בולי יומא ואיתיה – R' Meir went to the grave, and guarded [his purse] the entire day, and brought it back after the Sabbath. למחר אמרו לו הב לן ביסן – The next day, [R' Yehudah and R' Yose] said to [the host], “Give us back our purses.” אמר להו לא היו דברים מעולם – He

said to them, “It never happened,” i.e. you never entrusted your purses with me. אמר להו רבי מאיר אמאי לא דניקיתו בשמא – R' Meir said to them, “Why do you not examine names?” אמרו ליה אמאי לא אמרת לן מר – They said to him, “Why did master not tell us to distrust this man?” אמר להו אימר דאמרי – [R' Meir] answered them: “When I said that one should be particular about names, I meant only that suspicion is warranted in the case of someone with an unseemly name. – But with regard to establishing him as a wicked person, did I ever say such a thing?”^[29]

⑤ TALMUD (BERACHAS 7b)

Ruth. What is the meaning of Ruth? – R. Johanan said: Because she was privileged to be the ancestress of David, who saturated the Holy One, blessed be He, with songs and hymns. How do we know that the name [of a person] has an effect [upon his life]? – R. Eleazar said: Scripture says: *Come, behold the works of the Lord, who hath made desolations in the earth.* Read not *shammoth*, [‘desolations’], but *shemoth* [names].

⑥ MIDRASH (TANCHUMA - HA'AZINU)

One should always be careful to choose a name for his child suitable to the child's potential righteousness...the name can have either a good or bad influence.
MIDRASH TANCHUMA, PARASHAS HA'AZINU

7) B'SHA'AH TOVA

After Yitzchak, everyone was allowed to name his own child. Even so, we do not really choose the name ourselves, for Hashem is a partner in naming every child. The Ari z"l said, "None of the names in the world are coincidental." Those who think that children receive names at random are mistaken. Hashem must approve of every name, and that name then becomes associated with the character or actions of the person.¹¹ For this reason, selecting a name requires careful consideration.

8) TALMUD (ANUDA ZARA 27a)

According to the one who relies on *Thou shalt keep my covenant*, the qualification is not there, since a woman is not subject to the observance, while according to the one who relies on *He who is circumcised shall circumcise*, the qualification is there, for a woman should be classed among the 'circumcised'. But does anyone hold that a woman is not [qualified to perform circumcision]. Does not scripture say, *Then Zipporah took a flint?*⁴—Read into it, *she caused to be taken.*⁵ But it also says, *And she cut off!*—Read into it, *and she caused it to be cut off*, by asking another person, a man, to do it. Or you may say it means that she only began and Moses came and completed it.

9) TALMUD (BAVA METZIA 59a)

לעולם יהא אדם זהיר בכבודו — ואמר רבי חלבו — And R' Chelbo said: A person must always be careful about his wife's honor, because blessing is found in a person's house only on account of his wife. — שצאין ברכה מצויה בתוך ביתו של אדם אלא בשביל אשתו — As it is stated:¹⁰⁶ — *And he [Pharaoh] treated Avram well on her [Sarah's] account.* — ונהיינו דאמר להו רבא לבני מחוזא אוקירו לגשיבו בני היכי — And this is what Rava meant when he told the people of Mechoza: Honor your wives in order that you may become wealthy. — דתתקטרו