

different the perspective of blessing two is from blessing one. In moving from the motif of creation to that of revelation the blessings shift from the universal to the particular, from creation to history, from God as creator and monarch to that of teacher and lover, from a world in which God is the sole actor to one in which Israel and God interact, from a world in which God is spoken of to one in which God is spoken to, and from a blessing in which God and His creation are primarily adored to one in which God is primarily petitioned.<sup>144</sup> In the first, contemplation about the meaning of the structure of the universe leads to awareness of God's sovereignty. In the second, contemplation about the meaning of the teachings of the Torah leads to awareness of God's love. All these observations make explicit what is implicit in the reading experience of the liturgical narrative. The difference in perspective needs to be brought to the level of consciousness as it frames the meaning. Since perspective is to narrative what sequence of action is to plot, the fluctuating play of perspective must be spelled out in order to appreciate the experiential depth and conceptual complexity that result from the juxtaposition of blessings so disparate in their form and content.

### 3. The Third Blessing

The third blessing shares with the third section of the Shema<sup>4</sup> the thesis that God redeems Israel. Unlike the preliminary blessings, however, there is no readily accessible evidence for redemption as is the sunrise for creation or the Torah for revelation. The liturgy perforce falls back on the redemption from Egypt as a foreshadowing, if not as paradigm, of future redemption. Liturgy is uniquely capable of clasping together past redemption and future hope by grounding them proleptically in the present. Through memory, the past is molded to serve future expectation. As the memory of redemption sustains the hope for redemption, so past divine conduct serves as a warranty for future divine action.<sup>145</sup> The rhetorical strategy is articulated by Longinus: "If you introduce events in past time as happening at the present moment, the

144 Most of this list is based on Saul Wachs, "Some Reflections on Two Genres of Berakhah", *Journal of Synagogue Music* 22/1-2 (1992), p. 26. For an explanation of the differences between the two blessings, see below, part V.

145 So Joseph Qaro, *Kesef Mishneh*, ad Rambam, "The Laws of Qeri'at Shema", 1:6. For the impact of this idea on the formulation of the third blessing, see Kimelman, "The Literary Structure of the Amidah" [above, n. 119], p. 215, n. 204.

bestows the power to unify man's heart so that one can 'cleave to the commandments' and offer back to God the love one has perceived".<sup>140</sup>

The second section of the Shema' and the second blessing both seek to bring about compliance with the commandments. Their approaches, however, are distinct. What the former achieves through threats of punishment, the latter achieves through assurances of love. The punishment motif, in fact, is entirely absent from the blessing framework.<sup>141</sup> Positive reinforcement alone serves as its motivation. Through such motif conversion, a pact of loyalty became a covenant of love,<sup>142</sup> thereby transforming a biblical affirmation of fealty into a liturgical expression of ardor.<sup>143</sup>

Before moving on to the third blessing, it is important to note how

- 140 Alan Mintz, "Prayer and the Prayerbook", ed. B. Holtz, *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts*, New York: Summit, 1984, p. 411. For this formulation, see Kasher, *Sefer Shema' Yisrael* [above, n. 36], pp. 278a, 292b. Compare: "As you accepted My kingship out of love, accept My decrees [out of love]" (*Mekhilta, Ba-Hodesh*, 6, ed. Horovitz-Rabin, p. 222, l. 2).
- 141 Noted by Liebreich, "The Benediction Immediately Preceding..." [above, n. 122], p. 159. Similarly, the second section which makes agricultural abundance contingent upon the heeding of the commandments, concludes with: "Therefore you shall place these words of mine on your heart ...", whereas it is epitomized in the third blessing, as noted by the *Kol Bo*, ed. D. Avraham, 2 vols., Jerusalem, 1990, #69, by the positive formulation: "Happy is the man who heeds Your commandments, who places on his heart Your Torah and Your word" (*Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, p. 20, l. 10f.). The significance of the change was pointed out to me by Dr. Saul Wachs of Graetz College.
- 142 Although Moshe Weinfeld, "The Loyalty Oath in the Ancient Near East" [Hebrew], *Shanaton La-Miqra U-Le-Heqer Ha-Mizrah Ha-Qadum* 1 (1976), pp. 76–85, shows the extent to which the terminology of the blessing framework parallels that of ancient royal loyalty oaths, the type of reciprocal love depicted in the second blessing of the Shema' is unparalleled. Thus Ernest Nicholson notes that "To tell Israelites that Yahweh 'loves' them in the same way as a suzerain (e.g., Ashurbanipal or Nebuchadrezzar) 'loves' his vassals, and that they are to 'love' Yahweh as vassals 'love' their suzerains, would surely have been a bizarre depiction of Yahweh's love of, and commitment to, his people, and of the love and commitment with which they were called upon to respond" (*God and His People: Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986, p. 79). Thus, whereas political loyalty accounts for the form of the biblical case, reciprocal love accounts for its content; see Greenberg, "On the Refinement of the Conception of Prayer in Hebrew Scriptures" [above, n. 115], p. 68, and n. 11 on p. 66.
- 143 See Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, Minneapolis: Winston, 1985, pp. 80–86, for how "the idiom and the theology of covenant permeate the Shema" (p. 83).



interpolation of love here underscores the love *of* God in contrast to the oft-mentioned love *by* God.

The blessing holds that the experience of the grace of guidance provided by the commandments leads to the conclusion that they were given in love. In contrast to the position that compliance with the commandments expresses love for God, the blessing maintains that compliance with the commandments engenders such love. Nonetheless, the blessing goes beyond noting the typical reciprocal love between God and Israel as found in the following midrash: "Israel says: 'You shall love the Lord your God', and God says to them: 'With everlasting love have I loved you'".<sup>137</sup> The priority of God's unconditional love is thrown into relief when contrasted with an example of God's conditional love such as the following midrashic statement: "Whoever loves God and complies with His commandments and teachings God also loves him".<sup>138</sup> By positioning this blessing about God's love before the Shema's demand to love God, the point is made that we are to love the god who loved us first.<sup>139</sup> As love is best aroused by the awareness of being loved, the commandment to love God becomes liturgically an act of reciprocity – "the love of the lover", to use Rosenzweig's expression. Indeed, it is God's love of Israel that produces a God-loving Israel. Thus the blessing goes on to entreat God to render one capable of returning the love. Clearly, the experience of being loved nourishes the capacity to love. In fact, "God's love

above, n. 104.

137 Cited by Louis Ginzberg, *Genizah Studies* [Hebrew], 2 vols., New York: Hermon, 1969, 1:118.

138 *Sefer Pitron Torah*, ed. Urbach, p. 244.

139 So Judah Halevy, *Kuzari* 3:17; *Siddur of R. Solomon*, p. 89; Bahye b. Asher, *Kad Ha-Qemah* [above, n. 101], pp. 32, 34; and subsequent medieval and modern commentaries many of which are cited by Kasher, *Sefer Shema' Yisrael* [above, n. 36], pp. 272–278, 292–294. This placing of divine love prior to human love is paralleled by the order of the *Qedushah* of the Sabbath *Musaf* service (*Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, p. 78) where God "looks in mercy to His people who declare the unity of His name evening and morning every day regularly and say in love, 'Hear O Israel ....'" In the same vein, a Genizah text (see Ginzberg, *Geonica* [above, n. 62], 1:136) contains a blessing before the Shema' that states we are mandated "with regard to the recitation of the Shema', and to enthrone Him out of love" בא"י אמ"ה אקב"ו על קריאת שמע ולהמליכו באהבה, which is surely a shortened version of the common Palestinian blessing בא"י אמ"ה אקב"ו על מצות קריאת שמע (see Fleischer, "Qeta'im" [above, n. 6], p. 112).

own world, a lexicon within which Rabbinic writers articulate *new worlds of scriptural meaning*" (emphasis added).<sup>134</sup>

Both morning and evening versions of the blessing advocate the study of Torah and the heeding of its commandments as the means of disclosing divine love. The juxtaposition of the request for enlightenment in the Torah and for help in cleaving to the commandments with the request for the unification of the heart in the love of God is not without significance. By so linking the two, the morning version presents both study and observance of the Torah as paths leading to the love of God. The Torah and the commandments serve the dual function of expressing divine love and of providing the means for its reciprocation. Indeed, it is through sensing divine love that its human counterpart is sparked. God gave us Torah and commandments out of love. By complying with them we can come to requite that love. The sevenfold or so repetition of "love" in the morning blessing,<sup>135</sup> fairly evenly distributed among beginning, middle, and end, weaves its way through the whole passage. Indeed the first and the last words are "love". These ubiquitous glimmerings of love are also refracted in what appears in some versions as a nuancing of Ps. 86:6 – "Unite our heart to revere Your name" – to "Unite our heart *to love* and to revere Your name" (line 9).<sup>136</sup> The

134 Martin S. Jaffee, "The Hermeneutical Model of Midrashic Studies: What It Reveals and What It Conceals" (a review of Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*), *Prooftexts* (1991), p. 74.

135 *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, p. 14.

136 ויחד לבבנו לאהבה וליראה את שמך (*Mahzor Vitry*, p. 65; *Etz Hayyim*, p. 84; Eleazar b. Judah of Worms, *Perushei Siddur Ha-Tefillah La-Roqueah* 1:279; Abudarham [above, n. 95], p. 76; *Mahzor Romania*, and the liturgy of the Jews of Rome – Goldschmidt, *On Jewish Liturgy* [above, n. 67], pp. 128, 157. Maimonides, *ibid.*, p. 196, l. 5, just reads לאהבה את שמך, whereas *The Persian Jewish Prayer Book*, p. 60 and the version published by Fleischer, "Qeta'im" [above, n. 6], p. 146, read only ליראה את שמך. *Siddur Rav Sa'adyah Gaon*, p. 14, reads לאהבה את שמך וליראה מלפניך. The mss. of *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, p. 14, contain all three possibilities. Also, a *piyyut* of Joseph ibn Avitur to this blessing beseeches God's help על אהבתו ויראתו (Fleischer, *The Yozer* [above, n. 60], p. 279). The expression appears also at Qumran (*IQH* 16:7 and possibly 16:17, according to Licht's edition, p. 205) in the context of a prayer of gratitude for divine grace and election that emphasizes the importance of observing the commandments and cleaving to God, all of which parallel the concerns of our second blessing. In fact, before the aforementioned expression, "to love your name", appear the words ולרבוך באמת בריתך ולעבודך באמת ולב שלם. This is all the more remarkable in view of the position of *The Thanksgiving Scroll* that knowledge is God's gift to the chosen; see



the description of the psalmist (Ps. 1:2) of the man who delights in the Torah by reciting it day and night.

In rabbinic parlance, the term “recite” became the technical term for the articulation of the Shema'.<sup>130</sup> By associating “they are our life and the length of our days” with the twice daily recitation of the Shema', line 5 confirms the rabbinic position of fulfilling the biblical mandate of constant involvement in Torah study through reciting the Shema' by day and by night,<sup>131</sup> while possibly parrying the position that only around the clock engagement will do.<sup>132</sup> By excluding any reference to the land and by introducing both the study of Torah and the love of God as expressed through the teaching of Torah, a unit is formulated to sound fully biblical while accommodating the Torah-centered agenda of the Rabbis.<sup>133</sup>

This rewriting of Scripture with Scripture typifies the midrashic technique that, as we have seen repeatedly, pervades the liturgical reformulation of scriptural themes. It consists of “the notion that Scripture provides the vocabulary, through which midrashic discourse constructs and explores its

130 See Rabinovitz, *The Liturgical Poems of Rabbi Yannai* [above, n. 46], 2:142, n. 44.

131 See *J. Berakhot* 1:8, 3c; *B. Menahot* 99b; *Deut. Rabbah*, ed. Lieberman, p. 63; *Midrash Ps.* 1:17; *She'eltot De-Rab Ahai Gaon* 161, ed. Mirsky, Deut. 5:10; and *Menorat Ha-Maor* [above, n. 81], 2:94f. Cf. *Letter of Aristeas* 160.

132 As at Qumran, see *IQS* 6:6–7: ואל ימש במקום אשר יהיו שם העשרה איש דורש בתורה יומם ולילה תמיד (“And where the ten are, there shall never lack a man among them who shall study the Torah continually, day and night, each man relieving [?] his fellow”). For a full discussion of the text in terms of the ritualization of Torah study, see Steven D. Fraade, “Interpretive Authority in the Studying Community at Qumran”, *JJS* (1993), pp. 56–58. For the difficulties of translating the text, see idem, “Looking for Legal Midrash At Qumran”, eds. M. Stone and E. Chazon, *Biblical Perspectives: Early Uses and Interpretation of the Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah*, Vol. 28, Leiden: Brill, 1998, p. 66, nn. 24–25. On the phenomena of rabbinic covert polemics against Qumranic positions, see Magen Broshi, “Anti-Qumranic Polemics in the Talmud”, eds. J. Barrera and L. Montaner, *The Madrid Qumran Congress: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Madrid, March 18–21, 1991, Leiden: Brill, 1992: 2:589–600; and Albert I. Baumgarten, “Rabbinic Literature as a Source for the History of Jewish Sectarianism in the Second Temple Period”, *DSD* 2 (1995), pp. 18–22.

133 According to E. D. Goldschmidt, *The Passover Haggadah: Its Sources and History* [Hebrew], Jerusalem: Bialik, 1960, p. 39, the Haggadah also underwent an accommodation to a less Land-centered ideology after the destruction of the Temple.

liturgy, which could easily double for the second blessing of the Shema', cites the same verse from Nehemiah after stating, "You chose Israel ... and brought them close in love around Mt. Sinai".<sup>128</sup>

The order of the four also points to the practice of linking Torah with commandments, and statutes with laws, a practice that turns out to be an inversion of the way they are paired in 2 Kings 17. The inclusion of all four terms reinforces the Sinaitic setting of the blessing wherein the giving of Torah was first grasped as an expression of love as well as the position of Deuteronomy (4:14) that other statutes and laws were promulgated along with the Decalogue.

The other innovation of the blessing consists in orientating line 5 – "for they are our life and the length of our days" – to the study of Torah as well as to the commandments. In Deuteronomy 6 and 30, this phrase refers to observance of the commandments alone without any mention of the study of Torah. Moreover, Deut. 30:20 predicates residence on the land upon the keeping of the commandments: "By loving the Lord your God, heeding His commands, and holding fast to Him, you shall have life and length of days upon the land...". In contrast, the blessing omits any reference to the land<sup>129</sup> while underscoring the significance of Torah study by affirming that "we will recite them day and night". The idea of reciting the Torah day and night alludes to Joshua's admonition to keep the Torah constantly in mind – "Let not this book of Torah cease from your lips, recite it day and night" (1:8) and

revelation, via Ex. 19:6, by saying that God gave them to Israel "and made them all holy" (ed. Urbach, p. 240).

128 Fleischer, *Eretz-Israel...* [above, n. 119], p. 95; see idem, "Le-Sidrei Ha-Tefillah Be-Veit Ha-Keneset Shel B'nei Eres-Yisrael Be-Fostat Be-Reishit Ha-Meah Ha-Shlosh Esre", *Asufot* 7 (1993), p. 223; and Mann "Genizah Fragments" [above, n. 67], p. 323. The *Ma'aravot piyyut* of Joseph bar Samuel Tov 'Elem (11th century), "Toviah (= Moses) went up on high", recited on Shavu'ot eve, also links love with Sinai (l. 5) and refers to Neh. 9:13b (l. 11). Neh. 9:13 also appears in the Havdalah insertion of the holiday Amidah that coincides with the conclusion of the Sabbath; see *Siddur Rav Sa'adyah Gaon*, p. 151; and *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, p. 129, about which see Yehudah b. Ya'qar, *Perush Ha-Tefillot Ve-Ha-Berakhot*, 2 vols., ed. Sh. Yerushalmi, Jerusalem: Meore Yisrael, 1968, 1:27.

129 Compare the inclusion of the land referent of Deut. 30:20 in the *piyyut* of Joseph ibn Avitur to this blessing, cited by Fleischer, *The Yozer* [above, n. 60], p. 279.



Three biblical books are helpful in tracing the development of the liturgical image of God as a loving teacher. In Deuteronomy, Moses is the teacher, and God is the commander.<sup>124</sup> In contrast, Isaiah and Psalms are studded with references to God as teacher.<sup>125</sup> A midrashic treatment of the verse from Psalms (119:68), “You are good and beneficent, teach me Your laws”, shows the type of thinking that led to the liturgical image:

David said to the Holy One, blessed be He: “...*You are good and beneficent* to them [Israel] in every matter and *You teach them Your Torah* and Your commandments and Your laws as it says, ‘I am the Lord your God, *teaching you for your own good*, guiding you in the way you should go. (If only you would heed My commands)’” (Isa. 48:17–18) [emphasis added].<sup>126</sup>

The statement of David from Ps. 119:68, “You are good and beneficent, teach me Your Torah”; along with the citation of Isaiah (48:17), “teaching you for your own good”, epitomize the ideology of our blessing. By rereading the revelation as portrayed in Deuteronomy through the prisms of Psalms and Isaiah – with their idea of a beneficent, teaching God – the blessing opens the way to perceiving the teaching of Torah as an expression of divine love. After all, if God's beneficence entails teaching Torah, His love can do no less.

Having established that God's love entails teaching Torah, let us look at the terms for the Torah in the next line. Line 2 consists of four curricular subjects: Torah, commandments, statutes, and laws. These four appear as a unit four times in Scripture. Their order here matches that of 2 Chron. 19:10. Their context of revelation, however, matches that of the other three, namely, 2 Kings 17:34, 37, and Neh. 9:13b, all of which refer to the revelation of divine law. Indeed, Neh. 9:13b is preceded by the telling phrase, “You came down on Mt. Sinai and spoke to them from heaven” (9:13a), which is exactly the backdrop of the blessing.<sup>127</sup> Similarly, a Genizah version of the festival

124 See especially Deut. 4–6 where למד “teach” first occurs.

125 Ps. 25:4–5; 71:17; 94:12; 119, *passim*; 132:13; 143:10; Isa. 48:17–18.

126 *Midrash Leqah Tov*, the beginning of *Sav*, ed. Buber, p. 18a.

127 Eleazar b. Judah of Worms, *Perushei Siddur Ha-Tefillah La-Rogeah* [above, n. 72], 1:279, cites precisely this verse to account for the multiple synonyms for Torah study in the morning version. *Sefer Pitron Torah* finds the reference to Sinai to be so obvious that upon citing all four terms according to the order of the blessing, it alludes to the Sinaitic

suzerainty pacts. In the prophets, the marriage metaphor predominates.<sup>120</sup> In the liturgy, the theme of reciprocal love is presented through a pedagogic metaphor. Since God becomes Israel's loving husband long before becoming its loving teacher, it is surprising that the pedagogic metaphor won out notwithstanding the availability of both marital and pedagogic metaphors for the Sinaitic revelation.<sup>121</sup>

The absence of the marriage metaphor may be attributed to its difficulty in serving effectively as an analogy for both love and sovereignty. Teachers more easily command fealty, exercise mastery, and elicit love. Moreover, the image of the beloved as a student may be responding, proleptically, to the command that the love of God be reflected in the instructing of children/students as found in the first two biblical sections.<sup>122</sup> If love is reciprocated by teaching, then, goes the argument, it might well have been initiated by teaching. To quote Wordsworth's *Prelude*: "What we have loved, others will love, and we will teach them how".<sup>123</sup> Finally, the idea of portraying revelation as an act of teaching of Torah confirms the rabbinic idea of teaching Torah as an extension of revelation.

120 See Gerson D. Cohen, "The Song of Songs and the Jewish Religious Mentality", *Studies in the Variety of Rabbinic Cultures*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991, pp. 3–17.

121 For the marriage metaphor in rabbinic literature see *M. Ta'anit* 4:8 and parallels; *Mekhilta Ba-Hodesh* 3, ed. Horovitz-Rabin, p. 214 and n. 15; Reuven Kimelman, "Rabbi Yohanan and Origen on the Song of Songs: A Third Century Jewish-Christian Disputation", *HTR* 73 (1980), pp. 574–577; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah* [above, n. 43] 15:82f., n. 142; and Eliot Wolfson, "Female Imaging of the Torah: From Literary Metaphor to Religious Symbol", ed. J. Neusner et al., *From Ancient Israel to Modern Judaism: Intellect in Quest of Understanding, Essays in Honor of Marvin Fox*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991, 2:271–307. This accords with the view that the Song of Songs was given at Sinai; see Saul Lieberman, "Mishnath Shir ha-Shirim", *apud* Gershom Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*, New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 1965, pp. 118–122. The pedagogic metaphor is prominent in amoraic literature (see *Tanḥumah*, ed. Buber, *Yitro* 16; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 21, ed. Friedmann, p. 100b, and 33, p. 155b; *Pesiqta De-Rav Kahana* 12, ed. Mandelbaum, p. 223; *Ex. Rabbah* 28:5; and *B. Avodah Zarah* 3b), but absent from the tannaitic *Mekhilta, Ba-Hodesh* 5, ed. Horovitz-Rabin, p. 219.

122 See Leon J. Liebreich, "The Benediction Immediately Preceding and the One Following the Recital of the Shema'", *REJ* 125 (1966), p. 154f.

123 "Conclusion" of Book Fourteen. Cf. *Wisdom of Solomon* 6:17f.



Even those of Deuteronomy and Jeremiah, which provide much of the language of the blessing, lack the pedagogical image.<sup>117</sup> Whether or not the metaphor of God as a loving teacher is of liturgical coinage,<sup>118</sup> it achieved its most prominent expression through the liturgy.<sup>119</sup>

Why did an educational metaphor gain pride of place over a nuptial one? The deployment of a pedagogical image instead of a marital one for the language of love is all the more perplexing in view of the significance of the marriage metaphor for the biblical covenant. For our purposes, the relationship between God and Israel undergoes three major developments. In Deuteronomy, the relationship is primarily described in terms of ancient

Fleischer, *Hebrew Liturgical Poetry in the Middle Ages* [Hebrew], Jerusalem: Keter, 1975, p. 236; and idem, *The Yozer* [above, n. 60], pp. 57, 273, 537. The primary prophetic texts are Isa. 50:1–3, 54:1–10; Hos. 1–3; Jer. 2–3.

117 See Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy* [above, n. 10], pp. 82f., 368f.; and Tigay, *Deuteronomy* [above, n. 35], p. xv. Once the pedagogical image for God emerged, it was read back into Deuteronomy as when *Sefer Pitron Torah*, ed. E. E. Urbach, p. 241, mistakenly quotes Deut. 4:5 as evidence of God teaching rather than Moses.

118 Philo describes God as a teacher who praises the desire for learning (*Who is the Heir* 102) and frequently refers to God as teacher directly or by homology (see *ibid.*, 19; *On the Sacrifices of Abel and Cain* 65; *On the Preliminary Studies* 114; *On the Change of Names* 270; *Moses* 1:80; et al., references courtesy of Dr. Ellen Birnbaum).

119 For liturgical examples of God teaching Torah, see the second blessing of the Grace after Meals, the post-Sabbath interpolation in the Amidah, אֱתָהּ חֲנֻכָּתִי, and *B. Berakhot* 11b, along with Leon Liebreich, “Aspects of the New Year Liturgy”, *HUCA*, 34 (1963), p. 169, n. 119; Ezra Fleischer, *Eretz-Israel Prayer and Prayer Rituals As Portrayed in the Geniza Documents* [Hebrew], Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988, p. 187, n. 141; Joseph Heinemann, *Studies in Jewish Liturgy* [Hebrew], Jerusalem: Magnes, 1981, p. 179; and Reuven Kimelman, “The Literary Structure of the Amidah and the Rhetoric of Redemption”, eds. W. G. Dever and E. J. Wright, *Echoes of Many Texts: Essays Honoring Lou H. Silberman on His Eightieth Birthday*, Brown Judaic Studies, Atlanta: Scholars Press 1997, p. 183f., n. 47. For the image of God as teacher of Torah, especially in the future, in amoraic literature, see *J. Sabbath*, end of chap. 6, 8d; *Tanhumah*, ed. Buber, *Va-Yigash* 12, *Yitro* 13, and *Balaq* 23; *Pesiqta De-Rav Kahana*, 12, ed. Mandelbaum, p. 219; *Seder Eliahu Rabbah*, ed. Friedmann, p. 15; and *Liqutei Midrash Devarim Rabbah*, ed. Buber, p. 29. For the image of God as gracious grantor of knowledge in the *Thanksgiving Scroll*, see ed. Licht, p. 42f. God is explicitly beseeched, “Teach me your truth”, “Teach me Your laws”, in *IQH* 11:16, ed. Licht, p. 166, and *11QPs<sup>a</sup>* 24:8, ed. Sanders, pp. 80 and 110, respectively.

mention of love. Moreover, in contrast to presenting the Torah and its commandments as obligatory concomitants of the covenant, they appear here as expressions of God's beneficence.<sup>114</sup>

The parallel blessing of the evening service also stresses the link between love and teaching. Adhering to the syntax of the Hebrew, it translates as follows:

1. With everlasting love the house of Israel, Your people, have You loved.
2. Torah and commandments, statutes and laws, us have You taught.
3. Therefore, Lord our God, when we lie down and when we rise up,
4. we shall speak of Your statutes and rejoice in the words of Your Torah  
and in Your commandments forever,
5. for they are our life and the length of our days,
6. and we will recite them day and night.
7. May Your love never depart from us.
8. Blessed are You, O Lord, who loves His people Israel.

The parallel syntax and Hebrew rhyme scheme of lines 1 and 2 converge to make the point that God's election-love is expressed through teaching Torah and commandments. Lines 3 and 4 reinforce the idea that God's *everlasting* ('*olam*) love as expressed through such teaching is reciprocated by a commitment on Israel's part to rejoice and study the teaching and commandments *forever* (*le'olam*).<sup>115</sup> As the morning version, so the evening version presents the loving God as a teaching God.

The appearance of a pedagogical relationship as a metaphor for love is quite remarkable. One would have thought that the appropriation of Jeremiah's use of "everlasting love" would have triggered off analogues of connubial or parental love to express the relationship of God to Israel as does Jeremiah himself. The absence of other expressions suggestive of the connubial relationship found in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, or the Song of Songs is clear evidence that their love metaphors are not those of the blessing.<sup>116</sup>

114 See Neh. 9:13. For the idea that divine rule ensues from divine beneficence, see *Mekhilta, Ba-Hodesh* 5, ed. Horovitz-Rabin, p. 219.

115 For the biblical basis of the idea of the service of God as returned love, see Moshe Greenberg, "On the Refinement of the Conception of Prayer in Hebrew Scriptures", *AJSReview* 1 (1976), p. 67f.

116 As opposed to the '*ahavah* sections of *Yoser piyyutim* where they do appear; see Ezra



grasps revelation as God falling in love forever with Israel.<sup>111</sup> Such love is attested to by the gift of the Torah, pointedly called “the statutes of life”,<sup>112</sup> which God is entreated to grace Israel by teaching them as He taught their forefathers. By presenting the Torah and its teaching as gifts of love,<sup>113</sup> the blessing promotes the conclusion that God “chooses His people Israel out of love”.

The addition of the love motif to that of the Torah distinguishes this blessing from the standard blessing on the Torah. The latter opens with blessing God for having “chosen us from among all the nations and given us His Torah”, and closes with blessing God for “giving the Torah”, without any

Ta-Shma, “*Ahavat ‘Olam and Ahava Rabba – Two Versions of the Blessing Preceding the Shema*” [Hebrew], *Rabbi Mordechai Breuer Festschrift: Collected Papers in Jewish Studies*, 2 vols., Jerusalem: Academ Press, 1992, pp. 601–611, along with the poignant historical explanation of Avigdor Aptowitzer, “*Ahavah Rabbah Ve-‘Ahavat ‘Olam*”, *Ha-Zofe Le-Hokmat Yisrael* 10 (1926), p. 37ff.

- 111 The liturgy apparently understood Jer. 31:3a-b as referring to Sinai, as did R. David Kimchi, ad loc., and NJPS which translates “The Lord revealed Himself to me [so LXX] of old”. If 31:3c *על כן משכחך חסד* is taken as referring to the Torah, the Torah in the blessing is called *hesed*, just as *Midrash Ps.* 118:4 which states, “Moses gave them the Torah which is called *hesed*”. On the link between Torah/*brit* and *hesed*, see Moshe Weinfeld, “‘Ha-Brit Ve-Ha-Hesed’ – Ha-Munahim Ve-Gilgulei Hitpathutam Be-Yisrael U-Be-‘Olam He-‘Atiq”, *Leshonnenu* 36 (1972), pp. 92–95. In fact, a Genizah version (Mann [above, n. 67], p. 320) of the blessing consists of nothing more than Jer. 31:3b–c and the peroration.
- 112 *חוקי חיים*, see Lev. 18:5; Deut. 4:1,5, Ezek. 20:11, Neh. 9:29 and *Psalms of Solomon* 14:2. The “statutes of life” are also alluded to in the evening version’s reference to the Torah as “our life and the length of our days” (based on Deut. 6:2 and 30:20). Grasping the Torah as parallel to “ways of life”, a Genizah text states: *והוריענו דרכי חיים ונתן לנו את תורתו* (“Who made known to us the ways of life and gave us His Torah”); see Naftali Wieder, “Five Topics in the Field of Liturgy” [Hebrew], *Areshet* 6 (1980/81), p. 89. The Torah is also referred to as “the words of the living God” (*דברי אלהים חיים* [ARNA 1]). The related expression *תורה חיים* of *Ben Sira* 45:5 (the example in 17:11 is absent from *The Book of Ben Sira*, Jerusalem: The Academy of the Hebrew Language and the Shrine of the Book, 1973) is also associated with the revelation. The identical expression occurs in the 19th blessing of the Ashkenazic version of the Amidah; see *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, p. 28, l. 28; Eleazar b. Judah of Worms, *Perushei Siddur Ha-Tefillah La-Roqueah* 1:359; *Mahzor Romania* (Goldschmidt, *On Jewish Liturgy* [above, n. 67], p. 131); *Mahzor Vitry*, p. 67; and *Etz Hayyim*, p. 91.
- 113 As is also the Sabbath in the liturgy; see below, n. 274.

6. Our Father, merciful Father, have mercy upon us
7. by making our hearts understand, discern, listen, learn, teach, appreciate, do, and fulfill all the words of your Torah in love.
8. Enlighten our eyes in Your Torah and make our hearts cleave to Your commandments.<sup>105</sup>
9. Unite our hearts to love and to revere Your name.  
.....
10. You have chosen us from among all peoples and tongues
11. You have granted us access<sup>106</sup> to Your great name.
12. [To praise/acknowledge You and declare Your unity] out of love<sup>107</sup>
13. Blessed are You, God, who chooses His People<sup>108</sup> Israel out of love.<sup>109</sup>

The version that opens with the declaration of the beloved, “*With everlasting love have You loved us, O Lord our God*” inverts God's profession of love in Jer. 31:3 – “*With everlasting love have I loved you*” – in order to serve as Israel's acknowledgment of divine love.<sup>110</sup> The liturgy, following Jeremiah,

Vadus, 1986, p. 47, n. 269) which probably also means “grant us [knowledge]” as it is based on the biblical חנונו מחורתיך (Ps. 119:29b) and is redolent of the Amidah's fourth blessing (see *Num. Rabbah* 11:6): חנון... דעת ומלמד... בינה. Qumran also associates חנון with דעת (*IQS* 2:3; *IQH* 14:25; *11QPs<sup>a</sup>* 19:14); see David Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*, p. 216f., nn. 10–14. Accordingly, כן חנונו וחלמדנו is just fleshing out חנונינו.

105 The printed text of *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* (p. 14, l. 24) reads: והאר עינינו במצותיך ודבק לבנו ביראתך. Maimonides' version is identical, except for ביראתך he reads: יראתך (Goldschmidt, *On Jewish Liturgy* [above, n. 67], p. 196, l. 5).

106 For this translation, see Jacob Milgrom, *Studies in Levitical Terminology*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970, pp. 37, 87.

107 Despite the many variants, these two lines remain ideationally consistent. *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, p. 14, lacks the bracketed part.

108 For this accretion, see Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-fshutah* [above, n. 14], 4:802, n. 61.

109 For the variants, see Fleischer, “Qeta'im” [above, n. 6], p. 113.

110 The biblical context argues for the Sephardic version 'ahavat 'olam (“everlasting love”) over the Ashkenazic 'ahavah rabbah (“abounding love”) as does the following strophe of the New Month *Musaf* service אהבת עולם חביא להם וברית אבות לבנים חזכור (*Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, p. 89, ll. 2–3); see also *Seder Eliahu Rabbah* 7, ed. Friedmann, p. 31. For the argument over the terminology, see *Sefer Halakhot Gedolot* [ed. Hildesheimer] 1:6, n. 13; Lawrence A. Hoffman, *The Canonization of the Synagogue Service*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1979, pp. 30–39; Shraga Abramson, 'Inyyanot Be-Sifrut Ha-Geonim, Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1974, p. 224, n. 16.; and especially Israel M.



the strategy of both morning and evening blessing turns out to be an argument for the behind-the-scenes presence of a divine Director.<sup>101</sup>

## 2. The Second Blessing

The second blessing makes the case for the election of Israel as an expression of God's love. The argument is contained in the first half and last part. As always the conclusion is encapsulated in the peroration:<sup>102</sup>

1. With everlasting love have You loved us, O Lord our God
2. With great and exceeding compassion have You cared for us.
3. Our Father our King, for the sake of our ancestors who trusted in You
4. As You taught them<sup>103</sup> the statutes of life
5. So grace us by teaching us.<sup>104</sup>

*Ki-fshutah* 1:27, n. 6; *Osar Ha-Gaonim* 1:68 [*Ha-Teshuvot*]; see Israel M. Ta-Shma, "The Evening Prayer – Permission or Obligation?", ed. J. Tabory, *From Qumran to Cairo: Studies in the History of Prayer*, Jerusalem: Orhot Press, 1999, p. 136f.), or that the evening lacks a cultic correlate (*J. Berakhot* 4:1, 7b; see Avraham Aderet, *From Destruction to Restoration: The Mode of Yavneh in Re-Establishment of the Jewish People* [Hebrew], Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1990, p. 97, n. 99).

- 101 For the history of the argument from creation to creator, see Herbert A. Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity, Creation and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, chap 6. According to Bahya b. Asher (*Kad Ha-Qemah*, *Kitvei Rabbenu Bahya*, ed. H. D. Chavel, Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1970, p. 200), the correlation of times of prayer with the daily transitions of nature underscores the contrast between the transience of nature and the permanence of the divine.
- 102 The text follows the version of *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* save for one strophe. The differences among *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, *Siddur Rav Sa'adyah Gaon*, and the Sephardic version are charted out by Kasher, *Sefer Shema' Yisrael* [above, n. 36], p. 305f. Major variants are noted below.
- 103 *Siddur Rav Sa'adyah Gaon*, p. 14, and a Genizah version (Fleischer [above, n. 36], p. 146) read ותלמדנו. The final ם may have mistakenly split into a ן and a ן.
- 104 כן תחנונו ותלמדנו (*Mahzor Vitry*, p. 65; *Etz Hayyim*, p. 84; Eleazar b. Judah of Worms, *Perushei Siddur Ha-Tefillah La-Roqueah* 1:277; Abudarham, p. 75; similarly *Mahzor Romania* and the liturgy of the Jews of Rome – Goldschmidt, *On Jewish Liturgy* [above, n. 67], pp. 128 and 157). Others read only כן תחנונו (Fleischer, *The Yozer* [above, n. 60], p. 360; idem [above, n. 6], p. 146; *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, p. 14; *Siddur Rav Sa'adyah Gaon*, p. 14; *Siddur Rabbenu Shelomoh b. R. Natan*, p. 12; Eleazar b. Judah of Worms, *Perushei Siddur Ha-Tefillah La-Roqueah* 1:278; see Ezra Fleischer, "Prayer and Piyyut in the Worms Mahzor" [Hebrew], ed. M. Beit-Aryei, *Worms Mahzor – Introductory Volume*,

the evening for bringing on the evening twilight.<sup>100</sup> Despite the different foci,

100 *Midrash Ps.* 97:1. Thus the ideal times for prayer are dawn and dusk, specifically at the appearance and fading of the sun's light (*J. Berakhot* 1:5, 3a; 4:1, 7b; *B. Berakhot* 9b, 26a, 29b; *Shabbat* 118b; see Ginzberg, *Commentary* 3:58–60; and Daniel K. Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Leiden: Brill, 1998, p. 49, n. 119). As Ha-Meiri says: עקר המצווה בחפילה בין שחרית בין מנחה לכתחילה עם דמיומי חמה (*Beit Ha-Behirah*, on *Shabbat* 118b, ed. Lange, Jerusalem, 1968, p. 460) which, according to his *Commentary* on *Berakhot* 29b, means שחרית בשעת זריחה ומנחה סמוך לשקיעה. Thus *Midrash Tanhuma* (end of *Devarim*) castigates “One who sees the sun rise and does not say the blessing ‘Creator of light’, [and the sun] setting and does not say the blessing ‘Who brings on the evening dusk’”. In view of this, the title of the Qumran liturgy, דברי המאורות, which is translated as “words of the luminaries”, might better be rendered “words recited at the interchange of the luminaries” (see Falk, *op. cit.*, p. 59).

It is clear from much of the biblical and post-biblical evidence (see Nahum M. Sarna, “The Psalm Superscriptions and the Guilds”, eds. S. Stein and R. Loewe, *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History Presented to Alexander Altmann on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, University, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1979, pp. 291–294; and Gedaliahu Alon, *Studies in Jewish History* [Hebrew], 2 vols., Israel: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1970, 1:284f.) as well as from the liturgical indications of Qumran, from the Therapeutae, and possibly from Josephus that dawn and eventide were of comparable status, both being official times for praising God (see *IQS* 10, 1–3; *IQH* 12, 4–7; *IQM* 14, 12–14; *4Q503*; *4Q408* 1, 6–11, *4Q334*; Philo, *The Contemplative Life* 27; Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.8.13 [212], along with the discussions by Yigal Yadin, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light Against The Sons of Darkness* [Hebrew], Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1957, p. 343f.; Nitzan [above, n. 23], pp. 52–55; and Paul F. Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in the Early Church*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1982, pp. 4–6). For the phenomenon in the Early Church, see Robert Taft, *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding*, Washington, D.C.: The Pastoral Press, 1984, p. 132f. Poimandres also says, “when it became evening and the sun's light began to fade, I bade the people give thanks to God” (29) (Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1987, p. 458). In a letter to a pagan priest, Emperor Julian says, “We ought to pray often to the gods both in private and in public, if possible three times a day, but if not so often, certainly at dawn and in the evening” (*The Works of the Emperor Julian*, ed. W. Wright, 302A, 2:329). There is even a rabbinic position that the dawn and dusk recitations of the Shema' correspond to the times of the daily sacrifices (see *Deut. Rabbah*, ed. Lieberman, p. 63; and Rabinovitz, *The Liturgical Poems of Rabbi Yannai* [above, n. 46], 2:138, n. 5).

According to *M. Berakhot* 4:1, “The evening service has no קבע”. This either means that the evening service is not obligatory (so Rava, *B. Berakhot* 27b, see Maimonides, “Laws of Prayer”, 1:6; and *Tur Orah Hayyim* 235), or that the evening service lacks a fixed time (*Gen. Rabbah*, ed. Theodor-Albeck [above, n. 14], p. 780, n. 1; Lieberman, *Tosefta*



the seeds of belief in creation. The morning blessing succeeds to the degree that the worshiper perceives the newness of the day as indicating divine creation.

The problem of the night is the fear of portending chaos. The tactic of the blessing is to throw into relief the nocturnal structure as evidence of divine architecture. This follows the thinking of those contemporaneous philosophers about whom Cicero said:

When they had seen its definite and regular motions, and all its phenomena controlled by fixed system and unchanging uniformity, they infer the presence not merely of an inhabitant of this celestial and divine abode, but also of a ruler and governor, the architect as it were of this mighty and monumental structure.<sup>97</sup>

Several generations later, Philo made a similar point by emphasizing the rhythmic order of the heavens. He argues that whoever beholds

the yearly seasons passing into each other, and then the sun and moon ruling the day and night, and the other heavenly bodies fixed of planetary and the whole firmament revolving in rhythmic order, must he not naturally or rather necessarily gain the conception of the Maker and Father and Ruler.<sup>98</sup>

Both Cicero and Philo point to how the blessing is able to induce the worshiper to perceive the regularity of the night as an indicator of divine control. It is precisely the emphasis on divine control which vitiates any claim to theological dualism.<sup>99</sup>

The significance of the distinction between the novelty of the day and the regularity of the night is ascribed to R. Abbahu, who noted that God is exalted in the morning for constant daily renewal of creation and lauded in

97 Cicero, *The Nature of the Gods* 2:90.

98 *The Special Laws* 1:34; see idem, *Allegorical Interpretation* 3:97–99.

99 As, for example, found at Qumran with its dominion of darkness (ממשל חושך) and its dominion of light (ממשל אור); see 4Q503 13–16 6; 33–4:8; 1QS 10:1; 1QHa 20:4–7 [12:4–7]; and 4Q408 1:7–10. Alternatively, it is the emphasis on God as creator of both light and darkness that counters any argument for dualism; see *Hidushei Ha-RITBA to Berakhot* 11b, s.v., *amar abayei* (ed. Hershler, p. 52); and *Beit Yosef, Tur Orah Hayyim* 9, s.v., *barukh*.

the author of night as He is of day sunders the nexus between night and chaos.<sup>93</sup>

The change of the evening guard stars, as it were, a cast of thousands. In order to produce a splendidly orchestrated twilight spectacle, every role is said to be synchronized by divine speech in a manner evocative of Creation itself.<sup>94</sup> Presenting such an orderly change of stage and scenery bestirs in the worshiper the desire to have the great Designer extend His reign of the natural world over the human one (line 10).<sup>95</sup> Even in those versions where this request is absent, evidence of God's sovereign power in structuring the evening suffices to evoke the kingship motif.

The morning and evening prayers both mine the transformations of the day for evidence of divine sovereignty. They also adduce the created order as evidence of divine wisdom.<sup>96</sup> Despite the commonality, it is the contrast between the argument from day as opposed to that of night that is instructive. The problem of the day is the loss of religious resonance once its perceived regularity is taken for granted. As Aristotle noted, "it is really our too great familiarity with the marvels of nature that blind us to their meaning". The tactic of the blessing is to remove, to use the phrase of Coleridge, the "film of familiarity" that blinds us to the wonders of creation. As a static natural order enhances the plausibility of the eternity of matter, so perpetual newness plants

93 As the Psalmist says: "The day is Yours, the night also; it was You who set in place the moon and the sun" (74:16). Such creation-based theologies take their cue from Gen. 1:15.

94 On the history of the idea of creation by divine speech, see Michael Edward Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990, p. 67; and Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (above, n. 77), p. 201.

95 חמיר ימלוך עלינו is absent from *Siddur Rav Sa'adyah Gaon*, p. 27; and Maimonides [above, n. 67], p. 197, l. 9, albeit present in *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, p. 52, l. 9; the "Siddur" published by Shraga Abramson ("Le-Toledot Ha-'Siddur", *Sinai* 81 [1977], p. 186, l. 4); *Seder Hibbur Berakhot*, Abraham I. Schechter, *Studies in Jewish Liturgy*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1930, p. 109; *Mahzor Vitry* [above, n. 67], 101, p. 78; *Siddur of R. Solomon* [above, n. 18], p. 132; *Etz Hayyim* [above, n. 67], p. 85; *Mahzor Romania* and *Minhag B'nei Roma* (Goldschmidt, *On Jewish Liturgy* [above, n. 67], pp. 132, 160). David Abudarham (*Abudarham Ha-Shalem*, Jerusalem: Usha, 1963, p. 138) excludes it on formal stylistic grounds. Whether the verb is to be taken as jussive or optative is as much a contextual issue as it is grammatical. In the context of a blessing it may signify: "He will always rule over us". As a preface to the realization of divine sovereignty of the Shema', however, it likely expresses the hope: "may He continue to rule over us".

96 See above, n. 73.



the military metaphor of “the stars in their watches” (line 4)<sup>91</sup> as opposed to the more standard “stars in their courses”.<sup>92</sup> In toto, the realization that God is

threatening chaos of the night into an obedient expression of God's sovereign will; see Moshe Weinfeld, “God the Creator in Gen. 1 and in the Prophecy of Second Isaiah” [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 37 (1968), p. 122 and Yitshak Marzel, “Light and Luminaries” [Hebrew], *Beth Mikra* 28 (1983), pp. 156–161.

The contrast between theology and experience is also reflected in the liturgy. Despite the inexorable monotheistic logic of the first blessing for quelling the fears of the night, it proved emotionally inadequate. The logic of the first blessing overlaps that of the contemporaneous statement of Epictetus: “to have God as our maker, and father, and guardian, – shall not this suffice to deliver us from griefs and fears?” (*Discourses* 1.9. 8). Apparently it did not. An example of the difficulty of relieving the worshiper from such fears is the explanation of R. Samuel b. Nahman. On the one hand, he sees thrice-daily prayer as an expression of gratitude for the thrice-daily transformations of the heavenly sights; on the other hand, his epitome of the evening prayer reflects the common nocturnal apprehension when it says: “May it be Your will, O Lord my God, that You take me out of darkness into light” (see *Gen. Rabbah* 68:9, ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 779, notes, and parallels with Israel M. Ta-Shma, *Early Franco-German Ritual and Custom* [Hebrew], Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992, p. 190, n. 5). The foreboding aspect of night also appears in the apotropaic prayer *hashkivenu* that was added to the evening Shema’ and its blessings; see Mann, “Genizah Fragments” [above, n. 67], p. 322, n. 117. The bedtime Shema’ acquired a similar function; see *B. Berakhot* 5a; *J. Berakhot* 1:1, 2d; *Siddur of R. Solomon*, p. 95; and Ta-Shma, op. cit., p. 313. On both, see Menahem Kister, “Studies in 4QMiqsat Ma’ase Ha-Torah and Related Texts: Law, Theology, Language and Calendar” [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 68 (1999), p. 353f. The recognition of the apotropaic function of *hashkivenu* (see Ya’aqov Gartner, “Ha-Pores Sukkat Shalom”, *Sinai* 94 [1984], pp. 259–264) accounts for its inclusion more than the claim of numerical symmetry with the morning service. The claim of symmetry is probably an afterthought as it appears only in the late *Midrash Ps.* 6:1 since the parallel in *J. Berakhot* 1:8, 3c is open to question (see Ginzberg, *Commentary* 1:161). The consideration of symmetry, in any case, provides no explanation for its content. The secondary nature of *hashkivenu* vis-a-vis the first blessing is also reflected in the ruling that *hashkivenu* alone is eliminated when the evening service is recited after dawn (R. Zera, *B. Berakhot* 9a) as dawn obviates the need for an apotropaic prayer by dispelling fear of malignant nocturnal forces; see *Hidushei Ha-RITBA, Berakhot*, 9a (ed. Hershtler, p. 31).

91 והכוכבים במשמרותיהם; see David G. Burke, *The Poetry of Baruch*, Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1982, p. 107, on *Baruch* 3:34.

92 כוכבים במסילותם (*B. Berakhot* 59b) or כוכבים לנחיתותם (*The Hodayot Scroll [IQH]* 1:21) or כוכבים במסילותם (*4QBer<sup>b</sup>* 1:2 [4Q287]); see *Psalms of Solomon* 18:10.

“brings on evening” (2 and 11) mark the onset of night, whereas each internal strophe, as noted in the brackets, mentions day followed by night. The pervasive redundancy serves to point out the regularity and predictability of the heavenly changes at dusk in order to allay apprehensions of chaos in the face of the enveloping darkness. The measured quasi-symmetrical lines reflect the symmetry and regularity of the universe. The ten (italicized) transitive verbs can even point to an all-pervasive divine activity possibly redolent of the tenfold repetition of “God said” in the creation narrative.<sup>89</sup> The implied analogy between the poetic function of language and the creative activity of God informs the rhetoric of the blessing.

By disclosing how the night is orderly, coherent, and skillfully patterned, dusk now bears witness to structure. Instead of confusion, optimal divine control prevails. Evening is no longer the moment when the contours of creation become dissolved into primordial chaos. Instead, night, as in the biblical creation narrative, has been wrested from the vestiges of the darkness and formlessness of creation and pressed into the service of a rhythmic and beneficial creative order. As light unfailingly rolls away before darkness, so darkness unfailingly rolls away before light (line 6). As the creation narrative, our prayer apportions to darkness its time. Assigned a role in the overall structure of the cosmos, darkness no longer represents anti-structure. Since the order of the day does not collapse before any disorder of night, the recognition of nocturnal structure strengthens feelings of security as it dispels fear of pandemonium.<sup>90</sup> Such a sense of security is reinforced by deploying

*Israel and the Diaspora* [Hebrew], Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1990, p. 13), this liturgical chiaroscuro, mandated by the Talmud (*B. Berakhot* 11b), is based on Ps. 19:3.

89 See *Avot De-Rabbi Natan* [=ARN] B 36, ed. Schechter, p. 90, and parallels in n. 1. A Genizah version of a *paytanic* rendition of the parallel morning blessing also states that “[God] created on the first [day] ten things with the earth and heavens” (Fleischer, *The Yozer* [above, n. 60], p. 404). The Qumran version of *Jubilees* 2:2–3, mentions only seven in its creation prayer: “For on the first day He created the heavens that are above the earth ... darkness, dawn, light and evening which he prepared through His knowledge. Then we saw His works and we blessed Him regarding all His works, and we offered praise before Him because He had made seven great works on the first day” (4Q216 5:4,10–11; see *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, ed. J. VanderKam, Oxford: Clarendon Press, XIII:14).

90 The liturgy follows the Bible in viewing the nocturnal structure as an antidote to the fear of nightfall. Gen. 32:37; Ex. 4:24; 12:13, 23; and Job 3:4 all point to the association of night with malign powers, whereas Genesis 1 and Isaiah describe the domestication of the



*changes the times (i.e., of the day) [day, night].*<sup>83</sup>

4. *Alternating the times and arranging the stars in their watches according to His will [day, night],*<sup>84</sup>
5. *He creates day and night [day, night].*
6. *He rolls away light before darkness [day/night] and darkness before light [night/day].*
7. *He causes day to pass and brings night [day, night]*
8. *And distinguishes between day and night [day, night].*
9. *Lord of (the heavenly) Hosts is His name*<sup>85</sup>
10. *May the enduring, living God constantly reign over us forever.*<sup>86</sup>
11. *Blessed are You, Lord, Who brings on evenings [night].*<sup>87</sup>

This dusk or tellurion prayer is marked by repeated variations on the cyclical changes from light to darkness.<sup>88</sup> The framing strophes with their repetition of

3) based on the biblical expression *דלתי שמים פתח* (Ps. 78:23). Qumran has the expression *שערי אור* (4Q503, frg. 30).

- 83 The formulation parallels that of Jer. 10:12 = 51:15: *עשה ארץ בכחו מכין חבל בחכמתו ובתבונתו* which also appears in the Qumran *Hymn to the Creator* (11QPs<sup>a</sup> 26:13–14), prefaced by the word *ברוך* (“Blessed is He who makes the earth with His power, structures [or establishes] the world with His wisdom, and with His understanding stretched out the heavens”). The parallel motif in *The Hodayot Scroll* (1QH 1:13) also juxtaposes power and wisdom: *אתה בראתה ארץ בכוחה...הכינותה בחוכמתה*. Only our blessing makes no mention of power even though an appreciation of divine power permeates it.
- 84 Unless the reference is to the equinoxes and their seasonal constellations; see Ya’aqov Licht, *The Rule Scroll: IQS • IQSa • IQSb, Text, Introduction and Commentary* [Hebrew], Jerusalem: Bialik, 1965, pp. 204–208.
- 85 Following Jer. 31:35.
- 86 This divine epithet *אלהא חי וקיים* is difficult to translate. It is based on Dan. 6:27 *אלהא חי וקיים*. The morning counterpart blessing has the parallel expression *מלך אל חי וקיים* (*Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, p. 13, ll. 16–17), as does *B. Hagigah* 13a. The translation follows *Mekhilta Be-Shalah* 1 (ed. Horovitz-Rabin, p. 158, l. 1) in taking *אל חי וקיים* as an epithet for God. *Siddur of R. Solomon* [above, n. 18], p. 132, nn. 11–12, however, understands the evening version as “The living God who endures eternally will rule over us forever”. For the various issues, see Shelomoh Tal, *Ha-Siddur Be-Hishtalsheluto*, Jerusalem: Natan Tal, 1985, p. 65.
- 87 Who integrates sunset with nightfall, i.e., twilight; see Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 1–20* (AB4a), New York: Doubleday, 1993, p. 296, n. 3; and Amos Hakham, *Sefer Shmot*, 2 vols., Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1991, 1:184, n. 10.
- 88 According to Aharon Mirsky (*HaPiyut: The Development of Post Biblical Poetry in Eretz*

For Philo, the wonder consists of the astonishment at the transcendent order; for the blessing, it is of the grandeur of creation. As Abraham Joshua Heschel put it, "Awareness of the divine begins with wonder", and ends with "the discovery of the world as an allusion to God".<sup>80</sup> By apprehending the world through the lens of radical amazement, according to the blessing, the creation and its corollary of divine sovereignty are made believable.<sup>81</sup>

In contrast to the focus on the wonder of the new-born day in the morning blessing, the focus of the opening blessing of the evening service is on the regularity of the predictable night. Nonetheless, it seconds the thesis of divine sovereignty in the following manner:

1. Blessed are You, Lord our God, Sovereign of the universe
2. Who with His word *brings* on evening [night].
3. Who in wisdom *opens* the gates (of dawn)<sup>82</sup> and in understanding

80 Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, New York: Meridian Books, 1961, pp. 46, 78.

81 There are two major ways of grasping the significance of the linkage between creation and divine sovereignty. According to Cicero: "By contemplating the heavenly bodies, the mind acquires a knowledge of the gods – a knowledge which produces piety..." (*The Nature of the Gods* 2:153). Similarly, Sa'adya Gaon (*The Book of Beliefs and Opinions* 2:13, New Haven: Yale University, 1967, p. 131f.) noted the link between knowledge and love of the Creator. Maimonides ("The Laws of the Principles of the Torah", 2:2) explicitly says that the first blessing serves as a *preparatio* for love. For him, contemplation of divine wisdom as contained in the wonders of creation evokes the love entreated in the *ve-'ahavta* section (Deut. 6:5–9). On the other hand, Al-Nakawa following Halevy (*Kuzari* 3:17) links up creation with divine sovereignty differently, saying: "A person should focus his mind on the blessing of the luminaries ... on the heavenly spheres. Then the fact that God is one will take hold of his mind being that He is the creator of all, the heavens, the earth and all that is contained therein. He will then seek to realize divine sovereignty totally and recite the Shema' with proper intention" (*Menorat Ha-Maor*, ed. Enelow, 4 vols. New York: Bloch Publishing, 1930, 2:92). Accordingly, awareness of this linkage between creation and divine sovereignty leads to the human acceptance of divine sovereignty. In the same vein, a Genizah version of the evening service (Mann, "Genizah Fragments" [above, n. 67], p. 286) begins with the blessing for the realization of divine sovereignty as follows: בא"י אמ"ה אקב"ו על מצות קריית שמע להמליכו בלבב שלם וליחדו בלב טוב ולעבדו בנפש חפצה and then, in the first blessing of the evening service before the peroration, says (ibid., p. 308) מלכנו... בקר וערב נהללך ונברכך בלבב שלם ובנפש חפצה בא"י המעריב ערבים.

82 For such usage of "gates", see the corresponding blessing of the morning Sabbath service with its reference to God as הפותח בכל יום דלתות שערי מזרח (*Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, p. 71, l.



philosophical speculation. On the Jewish side, Philo remarked:

Struck with admiration and astonishment they [the philosophers] arrived at a conception according with what they beheld, that surely all these beauties and this transcendent order has not come into being automatically but by the handiwork of an architect and world-maker.<sup>77</sup>

On the pagan side, Sallustius asked: “Whence comes the ordering of world if there is no ordering power?”<sup>78</sup> Although the standard cosmological argument may lie behind the position of Philo and the blessing, it does not exhaust it. The cosmological argument, as found, say, in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, states: “From the greatness and beauty of created things, is their author correspondingly perceived” (13:5).<sup>79</sup> For Philo and the blessing, however, it is precisely the added element of wonder that renders such an argument cogent.

77 *Praem.* 42, cited by David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (AB 43), Garden City: Doubleday, 1979, p. 250. See *Ben Sira* 42:15–43:33.

78 *On the Gods and Ordered Creation*, 9, cited from Ramsay MacMullen, and Eugene Lane, eds., *Paganism and Christianity 100-425 C. E.*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992, p. 275.

79 Bahya ibn Paquda's unpacking of the cosmological argument, in the eleventh century, can serve as a commentary on the blessings:

“As for the nature of contemplation [of creation], it is discerning the traces of God's wisdom within creation, and evaluating them in accordance with the powers of discrimination. Although this wisdom is manifest in diverse ways among created things, it is all the same in source and origin.... Contemplation of creation in order to learn God's wisdom from it is incumbent upon us on the grounds of reason, Scripture and tradition... For the Creator arranged the world wisely, with proper order and clear divisions, in order that it might hint and teach us concerning Him – just as an artifact is to its artisan, or a house to the builder who built it” (*Torat Hovat Ha-Levavot*, 2.1–3 [ed. Kafah], pp. 98–101).

Similarly, a century later, Joseph Bekhor Shor states with regard to Ps. 19:5:

“Anyone observing [the heavens] can discern the creative activity of our God. Just as a person entering a house that has been built with wisdom and knowledge – lacking nothing and free of defect – can discern that it was built by a wise and knowing builder, although the architect is not actually visible and the house does not speak, in like manner a person observing the perfection of the heavens must know that they were created by a great, wise, and knowing creator, incomparable in wisdom” (cited in *Alei Sefer* 9 [1981], p. 66).

For these translations, see Alan Cooper, “Creation, Philosophy and Spirituality: Aspects of Jewish Interpretation of Psalm 19”, eds. J. Reeves and J. Kampen, *Pursuing the Text: Studies in Honor of Ben Zion Wacholder on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994, p. 20f.

says". A biblically conversant reader will realize that the creation narrative of Genesis is being evoked<sup>73</sup> just as it is evoked in the next strophe, lines 7–8, which concludes with the idea that the sovereign God has reigned alone since then. "Then" (*me'az*) refers to the aforementioned work of creation. The reference to creation is seconded by the parallel phrase "elevated from days of old" (*mi-mot 'olam*). The two synonyms for "ancient times" *me'az* and *mi-mot 'olam* together echo the creation imagery of Psalm 93, where they again parallel each other. Psalm 93 adduces the stability of the world to support its thesis that God has reigned from then (*me'az*), i.e. from creation, and from ever (*me'olam*).<sup>74</sup> It is clear that the rhetoric of the blessing is predicated upon hearing its biblical echoes.

The difference between the liturgical pointer to creation and that of Psalms is instructive. Whereas Psalm 93 uses the stability of the world to point to God's sovereignty, the blessing uses the renewal of creation to do so. In the former, the increased sense of security enhances the thesis of divine control; in the latter, the experience of wonder enhances the thesis of divine creation. Thus the language of Psalm 93 is not just being reused but rethematized to serve the thesis of the blessing.<sup>75</sup> The significance of the thesis of the linkage between wonder and creation is seconded by the concluding section, where the worshiper extols the sovereign God who alone performs wonders and renews creation.<sup>76</sup>

The linkage between wonder, creation, and Creator coincides with current

73 Similarly, the liturgy may understand the "wisdom" of Ps. 104:24 as referring to ראשית in בראשית of Genesis 1:1, as do the *Targumim* and *Gen. Rabbah*, ad loc., to indicate that God created the world in wisdom (see *Siddur of R. Solomon* [above, n. 18], p. 85, n. 41). For the overall link between wisdom and Gen. 1:1, see Gary Anderson, "The Interpretation of Genesis 1:1 in the Targumim", *CBQ* 52 (1990), pp. 21–27.

74 See also Prov. 8:22b and 23a along with Marc Zvi Brettler, *God is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor*, *JSOT Supplement Series* 76, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989, p. 145f. In the *'emet ve-yasiv*, a similar allusion is brought into play by the words וכסאו נכון ומלכותו לעד קיימת ("His throne is established and His kingship and faithfulness endure forever" [*Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, p. 19]), except the emphasis is, as would be expected coming after the Shema', upon God ruling forever as is the case in Lam. 5:19 – "But You, O Lord, are enthroned forever, Your throne endures through the ages".

75 For the dynamics of rethematization, see Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985, p. 285.

76 Following *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, p. 13.



wonders of the universe.<sup>69</sup> It works at engendering astonishment at the intricate, ingeniously formed creation while attributing the light and warmth of the daily sunrise to divine compassion. The argument revolves around solidifying the linkage between the experience of light and the idea of creation. Accordingly, it is optimally said at sunrise.<sup>70</sup> Having just experienced the dark and the cold, the worshiper is predisposed to grasp the sun's rays as expressions of divine mercy which in turn brings to mind His goodness at renewing the works of creation (lines 4–5). Similarly in a strophe of the *paytanic* preface to this blessing on the Sabbath, it states, “Who illumines the whole world and its inhabitants which He created with mercy”.<sup>71</sup> It is precisely this perspective on sunrise that renders it a signifier of creation and makes creation present and available by experiencing it as renewed daily.

This train of thought culminates in line 6 with the ejaculation of wonder – “How numerous/great are Your works O Lord, all of them You fashioned in wisdom, the earth is full of Your masterpieces”.<sup>72</sup> This strophe is actually a verse (Ps. 104:24) without the normal indications of citations such as “as it

69 The link between the Bible's mention of renewal in Ps. 104:30 – “You renew the face of the earth”, and the mention in the liturgy is that of Qumran in *4QBerakhot*<sup>a</sup> (4Q286 3.4) – *אחה בראת לה את כולמה מחדש*; see Bilhah Nitzan, “The Textual, Literary and Religious Character of *4QBerakhot* (4Q286–290)” [Hebrew], eds. Y. Hoffman and R. Pollak, *Jacob Licht Memorial Volume*, Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1997, p. 248.

70 See *T. Berakhot* 1:2 and parallels; *J. Berakhot* 1:2, 3c; and R. Yohanan and R. Zera at *B. Berakhot* 9b, and 29b with Rashi, on the blessing, along with *Tur Orah Hayyim* 58 and *Bet Yosef*, ad loc. Note that R. Judah disqualifies one who has never seen the luminaries from leading the recitation of the Shema' (*M. Megillah* 4:6; *T. Megillah*, ed. Lieberman, 3:28), for having never enjoyed a sunrise (so Judah Barzillai, *Sefer Yesirah*, Jerusalem: Maqor, 1970, p. 22; *Tosafot*, *Rosh Hashanah* 33a, s.v. *ha*; and Eliezer Joel Halevy, *Sefer RAVYaH*, ed. A. Aptowitzer, 4 vols., Brooklyn: Hevrat Mekize Nirdamim, 1983, 587, 2:313) as opposed to the forensic consideration of falsely testifying to an unseen event (so *Tanhumah*, *Toledot* 7). See below, n. 100.

71 *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, p. 71, l. 4.

72 Maimonides [above, n. 67], p. 195, l. 15, reads *קנייך* in the singular as does *Mahzor Vitry* [above, n. 67], p. 64, following Rashi (so Yizhak Baer, *Seder 'Avodat Yisrael*, Tel Aviv, 1957, p. 76). *Siddur Rabbenu Shelomoh b. R. Natan* [above, n. 67], p. 11, reads *קנייך* and Eleazar b. Judah of Worms, *Perushei Siddur Ha-Tefillah La-Rogeah*, eds. M. and Y. Hershtler, 2 vols., Jerusalem: Machon Harav Hershtler, 1992, 1:257 reads *קנייך* in the plural whereas elsewhere, p. 274, he reads *קנייך* in the singular.

request of line 9: "with your manifold mercies have mercy upon us". Since God's mercy extends to the earth, so goes the argument, it should surely extend to us.<sup>68</sup> In addition, by replacing "evil" with "all", darkness is disassociated from evil through dismembering the parallel between them. This disassociation of evil from darkness adumbrates the theme of the evening blessing while linking the two. The severing of the literary parallel paves the way for the severing of the metaphysical one. The goal is the removal of darkness from the realm of evil or chaos by subsuming it under the realm of divine sovereignty.

The agendum of the blessing is to present God as creator and hence as mon-arch, i.e., single ruler. In order to bring about the acceptance of its agendum the blessing attunes the worshiper to the diurnal renewal of the

*Mahzor Vitry*, ed. S. Horowitz, Mekize Nirdamim, 1923 (=Jerusalem: Alef, 1963), 90, p. 64; and in Jacob b. Jehuda Hazan of London, *Etz Hayyim*, ed. I. Brodie, Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1962, p. 82. It is absent from other Genizah versions (see Jacob Mann, "Genizah Fragments of the Palestinian Order of Service", *HUCA* 2 [1925], p. 294; Schechter, "Genizah Specimens" [above, n. 67], p. 655; and Fleischer, *The Yozer* [above, n. 60], p. 359) as well as from the versions of Maimonides (D. Goldschmidt, *On Jewish Liturgy* [Hebrew], Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1980, p. 195), *Mahzor Romania* (ibid., p. 128); the Roman rite (ibid., p. 157), the Yemenite *Tikhlah Etz Hayyim* (Jerusalem, 1977, p. 6b), and from a similar prayer at Qumran (*4QBerakhot* [4Q286]). There are also versions that read "wisdom" (חכמה) instead of "mercy" (see *The Persian Jewish Prayerbook*, ed. Sh. Tal, Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1980, p. 55, with n. 10; and *Siddur Rabbenu Shelomoh b. R. Natan*, ed. Sh. Haggai, Jerusalem, 1995, p. 11). Nonetheless, its antiquity cannot be precluded since a version of the Eucharistic prayer named after Addai and Mari, which may reflect the liturgy of the ancient Church of Edessa and is thus to be dated no later than the third century, contains the line: "Who created the world in his grace and its inhabitants in his loving-kindness" (B, 12 – A. Gelston. *The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, p. 49). Still this may not be probative since this anaphora and the first two blessing of the Shema' are – as shown by Gelston, ibid., p. 70f. – otherwise distinct; cf. J. Vellian, "The Anaphoral Structure of Addai and Mari compared to the Berakoth Preceding the Shema in the Synagogue Morning Service", *Le Muséon* 85 (1972), pp. 201–223. In any event, in 3 *Macc.* God is addressed as "King...who governs the whole creation with mercy" (6:2).

68 In a similar vein, *M. Ta'anit* 4:4 concludes a liturgical petition with "Blessed are You O Lord who has mercy on the land". In both instances, as in the hymnic prelude to *Baruch She-'Amar* (*Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, p. 7), the case for God having mercy on the supplicant is made by pointing to His having had mercy on the land/earth.



.....<sup>66</sup>

10. Blessed are You, Creator of the luminaries.

Line 1, “Blessed are You, Lord our God, Sovereign of the world”, is the standard six-word Hebrew formula that opens all official rabbinic blessings. Lines 2–3 have as their intertext Isa. 45:7, with which it is identical save that the ending “creates all” replaces the original “creates evil”. The claim that Isa. 45:7 is the intertext implies that the liturgical text is to be understood in the light of it. The correct construal of meaning takes place in the mind of the reader who juxtaposes both texts. It is through the superimposition of the biblical text on the liturgical text that the liturgical meaning coalesces. In other words, the meaning of the liturgy exists not so much in the liturgical text *per se* as in the interaction between the liturgical text and the biblical intertext. Meaning, in the mind of the reader, takes place between texts rather than within them.

What is the meaning that results when the biblical text is placed, as it were, behind the liturgical text? The recognition of the Isaianic verse that lies behind the liturgical text primes the reader to expect that “creates evil” will parallel “creates darkness”. The expectation of “evil”, however, is subverted by the presence of “all”. The move from evil to all changes nothing theologically, as Isaiah himself goes on to say, “I the Lord do *all* these things”, but it does affect a change in the mind of the worshiper. By subverting the expectation of “evil” with “all”, the positive aspect of God is highlighted through removal of the negative. What is out of sight is out of mind. The exchange of “all” for “evil” along with the mention, in line 4, of the sunlight being brought on with mercy,<sup>67</sup> sets the stage for the upcoming

as “of old”. Nonetheless, since the context is the creation of the world, it is likely that both temporal and spatial coordinates are intended in order to suggest the notion of totality (see E. J. Wiesenberg, “The Liturgical Term Melekh Ha-olam”, *JJS* 15 [1964], p. 3 and above, n. 39).

66 The missing part focuses primarily on the angelic coronation ceremony of God of which part is discussed below and part in Reuven Kimelman, “Who is Greater Israel or the Angels? The Rabbinic Qedusha Versus its Qumran Counterpart” (forthcoming).

67 רחמים (“mercy”). The antiquity of such a version is open to question. Although it appears in a Genizah version (see Solomon Schechter, “Genizah Specimens”, *JQR [OS]* 10 [1898], p. 654); in *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, p. 12; in the individual section of *Siddur Rav Sa’adyah Gaon*, p. 13 (though not in the communal one, p. 36); in Simhah b. Samuel,

convergence of experience and theology that makes the theology plausible. Indeed, the rhetorical strategy succeeds as the receptivity to the theology increases.

### 1. The First Blessing

The structure of the opening blessings of the morning and evening service exemplifies the relationship between experience and event as well as between event and theology.<sup>62</sup> The opening argument, whose conclusion is encapsulated in the peroration of the morning blessing, reads as follows:

1. Blessed are You, Lord our God, Sovereign of the world
2. (Who) forms light and creates darkness
3. (Who) makes peace and creates all.
4. Who illumines the earth and its residents with mercy.
5. And with His goodness renews every day continually the work of creation.
6. "How<sup>63</sup> numerous/great<sup>64</sup> are Your works O Lord, all of them You fashioned in wisdom, the earth is full of Your masterpieces".
7. O Sovereign (who) alone was exalted from then,
8. Praised, glorified, and elevated from days of old.
9. Lord of the world/eternity<sup>65</sup> with Your manifold mercies have mercy on us.

62 It is precisely the absence of this relationship and its concomitant rhetorical effect that characterizes the shorter version (see *Siddur Rav Sa'adyah Gaon*, pp. 13, 35). On the relationship between the two blessings, see Louis Ginzberg, *Geonica*, 2 vols., New York: Hermon Press, 1968, 1:130; and Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*, ed. R. Scheindlin, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993, translated from *Ha-Tefillah Be-Yisrael Be-Hitpathut Ha-Historit*, eds. J. Heinemann et al., Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1972, pp. 13, 385, nn. 6–7.

63 מה here connotes "wow". Both the Hebrew and the English force the mouth to open wide in amazement.

64 רבו can bear both meanings. Since the intent is to evoke wonder at the grandeur of creation, a term that simultaneously underscores this, both numerically and size-wise, was chosen in order to compound the impact. See next note.

65 עולם, normally עולם in rabbinic Hebrew, is understood spatially as "world", i.e., all of space. Here, however, its biblical meaning as all of time, therefore eternal, may predominate since liturgical Hebrew tends to emulate biblical usage (see Jeffrey H. Tigay, "On Some Aspects of Prayer in the Bible", *AJSReview* 1 [1976], p. 373, n. 79). Moreover, the previous phrase deploys the term to refer back to the beginning of time, rendered here



perorations (*hatimah / hitum*) that encapsulate the themes of the blessings make this explicit.<sup>59</sup> According to them, the first morning blessing celebrates God as creator of the luminaries, whereas the first evening blessing celebrates God as orchestrator of the onset of evening. Both share the motif of creation.<sup>60</sup> In both morning and evening services, the second blessing celebrates God as lover/chooser of Israel, whereas the third celebrates God as redeemer of Israel.

All the blessings possess a common rhetorical structure. The structure consists of three dimensions: a theological affirmation, a divine idea-event, and an experiential link. By anchoring divine sovereignty in the divine idea-events of creation, revelation, or redemption, followed by a parallel in experience, the argument for such sovereignty is enhanced. All three blessings are structured so as to induce in the worshiper a perception that confirms reality as evidence of divine sovereignty. By rooting these idea-events in experience, the liturgy renders them more palpable while enhancing the worshiper's receptivity to its theological agendum. Martin Buber penetrated to the significance of the role of this experiential component in theological affirmation by noting that "both creation and redemption are true only on the premise that revelation is a present experience".<sup>61</sup> This linkage between theology and experience informs, as we shall see, the rhetorical structure of the liturgy.

Anchoring the events of creation, revelation, and redemption in human reality renders the sovereignty of God more realizable. By mining human experience for intimations of these events, they become amenable to prayer. The purpose of the prayer is to get the worshiper to construe his/her experience in a manner that will confirm its theological agendum. It is the

59 For the halakhic principle that everything follows the peroration, see *B. Berakhot* 12a with R. Yom Tov ibn Asvelli, *Hidushei Ha-RITBA*, ad loc., ed. Hershler, p. 65; and *J. Berakhot* 1:8, 3d.

60 As is implicit from what follows and explicit in early *piyyutim* (see Ezra Fleischer, *The Yozer – Its Emergence and Development* [Hebrew], Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1985, p. 85), the creation of the luminaries serves as a synecdoche for the whole creation that began with "Let there be light".

61 Martin Buber, "The Man of Today and the Jewish Bible", in *Israel and the World*, New York: Schocken, 1963, p. 95. This understanding permeates Franz Rosenzweig's *Star of Redemption*. See below, end of part V.

literature to the realization of divine sovereignty and to the keeping of the commandments.<sup>58</sup>

#### **D. The Blessings of the Shema'**

The failures to account for the presence of the redemptive motif underscore the need for an alternative explanation of the whole tripartite unit. Such an explanation needs to account for the incorporation of the redemptive motif while showing that the thematic unfolding of the Shema' and its blessings conspire to deliver a message greater than its parts. Whatever the original motivation for the sequencing of the three sections of the Shema', the liturgical understanding of the sequence should be discernible by correlating the blessing framework with its biblical core.

Such a correlation for analytical reasons will be linear, following the order of the motifs of the blessings. A linear reading alone, however, turns out to be ultimately misleading since it creates the impression that the goal of the whole composition is its final motif, namely, redemption. On the other hand, as we shall see, a chiastic reading by virtue of its pyramidal structure underscores the centrality of the realization of divine sovereignty. Since this theme unifies the whole composition, it is clear that a linear reading must give way to a chiastic one.

As the unifying theme of the Shema' and its blessings, the realization of divine sovereignty is refracted through the motifs of creation, revelation, and redemption. Having its own blessing, each motif constitutes a movement of the Shema' composition. The two on creation and revelation precede the Shema', whereas the one on redemption succeeds it. In the first and third movements of creation and redemption, the theme of divine sovereignty is reinforced by the testimony of celestial and terrestrial choirs. Through the orchestration of these heavenly and earthly realms, divine sovereignty is attested to throughout the universe. By including references to past as well as present, to heaven as well as earth, the liturgy presents the whole from the perspective of an omniscient narrator.

It is the correlation between the blessing framework and the three biblical sections that lends architectonic structure to the whole composition. The

58 As is noted in the parable in *Sifre Numbers* 115, p. 127f., on this section.



God”; whereas the second part, comprised of verse 41, ends with “I am the Lord your God”.

The first part makes the point that the fringes are a mnemotechnical device for keeping the commandments in mind. The purpose of such attention to the commandments is to eventuate in action, as the Talmud notes: “Looking upon leads to recalling and recalling leads to action”.<sup>55</sup> The visual and mental are mobilized for doing. Whereas the opening of this part promotes compliance with the commandments, the closing seeks to prevent their transgression by keeping in check the urges of the heart and the straying of the eyes. Both opening and closing converge to make Israel holy to God. The second part of the section adds to the above the assertion that God engineered the redemption from Egypt in order to be Israel's god.<sup>56</sup>

The third section as a whole shares some elements with the first two. The first part of the third section corresponds to the second section of the Shema' (Deut. 11:13–21). Its exhortation to comply with the commandments (Num. 15:39) matches the verse “If you will heed my commandments” (Deut. 11:13) of the second section. Its counsel against straying after one's heart matches the verse “Take care lest your heart tempt you” (Deut. 11:16) of the same section. Moreover, its warning against going astray after the eyes and heart may correspond to the location of the tefillin between the eyes and on the arm facing the heart. The assumption that the commandments to be recalled upon gazing at the fringes are those of the Shema' verse – the acceptance of divine sovereignty and the exclusion of idolatry, as the *Sifre* contends,<sup>57</sup> further solidifies the link with the first section.

Such is not the case with the redemptive motif of the second part of the third section. It has no verbal link with the first two sections even though redemption is linked extensively, as we shall see, in biblical and rabbinic

55 *B. Menahot* 43b.

56 See Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers, The JPS Torah Commentary*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990, pp. 127f., 413f.

57 *Sifre Numbers* 115, ed. Horovitz, p. 126. In *B. Menahot* 43b and *J. Berakhot* 1:5, 3a the issue is reduced to the earliest time for the recitation. In both cases, the subject is the reference in the context of the liturgy and not in the Bible in which it would have an alternative reference; see, e.g., the *baraita* in *B. Menahot* 43b on Deut. 22:11–12.

punishment motif for compliance, or noncompliance, with the commandments since the subject is the collective destiny of Israel. The singular formulation suits the first section's total focus on the love motif, requiring as it does an individual response. Whereas collective behavior needs incentives to goad it into compliance and disincentives to deter it from transgression, the love demanded of the individual in section one requires no incentives outside of the love itself.

In any event, Sarna provides no pertinent explanation for the inclusion of the third section. His emphasis on the obvious importance of the Exodus does not explain the inclusion of the motif here nor the selection of this specific section.

The third section reads as follows:

(37) The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: (38) Speak to the Israelite people and say to them that they are to make for themselves fringes (or tassels) on the corners (or wings) of their garments throughout the generations; and are to put on the corner tassel a thread of royal blue. (39) And it shall be for you for viewing so that when you look at it you will bear in mind all the commandments of the Lord and keep them, that you not go astray after your heart and eyes after which you lust. (40) Thus you shall bear in mind and keep all my commandments and thus be holy to your God. (41) I am the Lord your God, who took you out of the land of Egypt, to be to your God. I am the Lord your God (Num. 15:37–41).

The Talmud justifies the inclusion of the third section by listing its five elements. They are: "the commandment of the fringes, the Exodus, the authority of the commandments, (the negation of) heretical beliefs<sup>52</sup> and sinful and idolatrous thoughts".<sup>53</sup> Although there is some disagreement as to the explicitness of the third, namely, the authority of the commandments,<sup>54</sup> all agree on the explicitness of the first two. It is also clear from the wording of the third section that the first two elements are the two primary foci. Thus the first part, comprised of verses 38–40, ends with "And thus be holy to your

52 This one is absent from the Munich ms. and some parallels; see *Yalqut Shimoni* 1:750, ed. Heiman-Shiloni, *Numbers*, p. 301, n. 72; and *Midrash Ha-Gadol Numbers*, ed. Rabinowitz, p. 258.

53 *B. Berakhot* 12a.

54 See *Midrash Ha-Gadol Numbers*, p. 258, n. 18.



consisting of studying, doing, and recalling. Maimonides, however, fails to provide an overarching rationale for all three sections in general,<sup>48</sup> nor does he provide any rationale for the redemptive motif in particular. The absence of the latter is made all the more conspicuous by the talmudic requirement to evoke the Exodus<sup>49</sup> in the Shema' liturgy.<sup>50</sup>

A recent account of the three sections by Nahum Sarna suffers from the same deficiency. According to him, the three "express fundamental doctrines of Judaism" in the following manner:

[A] They proclaim the existence and unity of God, the call for the loving surrender of the mind and will to His demands, the charge to make God's teaching the constant subject of study and to ensure the education of the young, [B] faith in divine righteousness with its corollaries that society is built on moral foundations, that there is reward for virtue and punishment for evil and [C] finally, and above all, that the experience of the Exodus is of transparent importance in the religion of Israel.<sup>51</sup>

Although not stated explicitly, it may be assumed that A and B correspond to the first two sections, whereas C – to the third.

In contrast to Maimonides, Sarna underscores the focus in section two on the "moral foundations, that there is reward for virtue and punishment for evil". Highlighting the reward and punishment motif of section two makes its absence in section one all the more notable. Section two also differs from section one in that much of it is formulated in the plural. Both distinguishing characteristics converge. The plural formulation fits the reward and

48 In an effort at refining the Maimonidean position, Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, *Shi'urim Le-Zekher Abba Mori Z"L*, Jerusalem, 5743, p. 23, argues that the common denominator of all three sections is the acceptance of the sovereignty of God, an acceptance that takes place in six stages, namely, the unity of God, the love of God, the study of Torah, the yoke of commandments, fringes, and remembering the Exodus. It is questionable whether any single theory can account for the inclusion of all three sections. Still, as we shall see in part V, the idea of the realization of divine sovereignty has the most explanatory power for the Shema' liturgy.

49 For this rendering of מוֹכִירִין יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם, see Ginzberg, *Commentary* 1:207.

50 See *B. Berakhot* 13b (Bar Qappara and R. Simeon son of Rabbi); and *Ex. Rabbah* 22:3 with Kasher, *Torah Shelemah* [above, n. 43], 14:89, n. 121.

51 Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus: The JPS Torah Commentary*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991, p. 271.

term<sup>44</sup> in order to extend the demands of love to embrace heart and mind, body and soul, economic and physical resources.<sup>45</sup> The result is the total mobilization of the human being toward a love of God that is unreserved, all-demanding, at all times, in every place, whatever the bodily posture.<sup>46</sup> This may already be indicated proleptically in the understanding of *me'od* here as “exceedingly”.<sup>47</sup> *Me'od* thus functions to anticipate the conclusion of the rest of the section, whose purpose is to specify how to come to love God exceedingly. If this is kept in mind along with the two implications of *me'od*, the threefold commandment to love God with everything ends up not only including means and might but also climaxing with the demand that the love of God be maximized with “all your veriness”, namely, to the utmost.

In sum, verses six through nine state what is entailed in the total love of God. Six accomplishes this with regard to all one's heart and mind, seven/eight – with regard to all one's body and desires, eight/nine – with regard to loving God exceedingly.

With regard to sections two and three, Maimonides, as noted, deemed the essence of the former to be the charge to fulfill all the other commandments and that of the latter to be the charge to remember them. He holds that their sequence corresponds to their relative gravity with the more consequential coming first. Their hierarchy of value also reflects a pedagogical order

44 As is clear from the redaction of *Sifre Deut.* 32, ed. Finkelstein, p. 55; and Rabbenu Bahya, *Deut.* 6:4. Thus, “with all your heart/mind” can also mean “with every dimension of your heart/mind” (בכל לב בך, *ibid.* l. 2) and “all your soul” – “with every dimension of the soul that He created in you” (בכל נפש שכרא בך, *T. Berakhot* 6:7, ed. Lieberman, p. 35, l. 38).

45 One of the earliest interpretations of the threefold love of the Shema' may be the Qumran *Rule of the Community* which requires that members bring “their mind, their strength and their wealth” (דעתם כוחם והונם – *IQS* 1:12, 3:2) as an expression of their full devotion to God. Apparently both Qumran and the Rabbis saw the threefold demand as an expression of totality. Qumran took that to mean intellectually/mindfully, physically, and financially. Rabbis took it to mean with all your psychic energies (בשני יצריך), with all your life – “even if He takes your life/soul” (אפילו נוטל את נפשך), and with all your finances (בכל ממוןך).

46 Following Bet Hillel (*B. Berakhot*, 11a). Thus Yannai underscores that the Shema' is recited “sitting, standing, riding, walking” (Zvi Meir Rabinovitz, *The Liturgical Poems of Rabbi Yannai According to the Triennial Cycle of the Pentateuch and the Holidays* [Hebrew], 2 vols., Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1985–1987, 2:143); see Bechor Shor, *ad loc.*

47 מאד מאד, So Ibn Ezra and Nachmanides, *ad loc.*



self or one's vitality. The self/vitality here comprises the total person, a personhood that includes progeny and body; the former to be instructed, the latter to be incorporated in the love of God as the bearer of the symbols of such love.

The third demand, "Love ... with all your *me'od*", corresponds to verse nine, "Inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (9). Traditionally, *me'od*, refers to "means"<sup>41</sup> or "might".<sup>42</sup> Since neither tradition has biblical philological support, it appears that both took *me'od* as meaning "exceedingly" or "with all your capacities", except the first understood it to imply "with all your financial resources", and the second – "with all your physical resources". As "means", it links up with verse nine with its demand that the home be dedicated to the love of God, since the house is one's quintessential possession. As "might", it links up with the tefillin of verse eight, since the hand tefillin of verse eight epitomizes the harnessing of one's strength in the love of God, possibly on the model of Ex. 13:9 where the tefillin constitutes a memento of God's mighty hand.<sup>43</sup> Although this link could shift verse eight from the second category of *nefesh* over into the third category of *me'od*, its double valences keep it in both.

The threefold love of God is in each case designated by a polysemic

Deut. 23:25; Ps. 27:12; Prov. 27:7; Job 23:13; Song of Songs 1:7, 3:1–4 with Ibn Ezra, Bechor Shor, and Rabbenu Bahya, ad loc.; *Sefer Ha-Minhagot* [above, n. 37], p. 134, and especially the phrase נפש חפצה in the Genizah blessing before the Shema' (cited below, n. 81), based on 1 Chron. 28:9, along with 2 Maccabees 1:9. Sensitive to the distinctive function of each term, RaLBaG (to Deut. 6:5), contends that *nefesh* cannot denote desire as *lev* already does. For its semantic field, see *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, eds. L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner et al., 3 vols., Leiden: Brill, 1994–1996, 2:711–713.

41 See the Aramaic versions, the Midrash, and the Syriac, all cited by Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy* [above, n. 10], p. 332.

42 LXX: *dynamis* ("strength"). Similarly, חיל also refers to both means (e.g., Ps. 49:7) and strength (e.g., 1 Sam. 2:4). The parallels in 2 Kings 23:25, *Ben Sira* 6:26, 7:30, and *Tobit* 14:9 (see 13:6) cannot determine its meaning here as their usage is derivative of the verse here. According to *Sefer Ha-Minhagot* [above, n. 37], p. 134, *me'odkha* indicates "your excellence", i.e., what you excel over others (יתרון שהוחזק על מי שלמטה ממך).

43 For the house-possession link, see Moshe Coucy, *Sefer Mitsvot Gadol*, positive Mitsvah 3 (cited in Kasher, *Sefer Shema' Yisrael* [above, n. 36], p. 189f.). For the hand-strength link, see *Midrash Or Ha-Afella* (cited in Menahem Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, 43 vols., Jerusalem: Beth Torah Shelemah, 1949–1992, 12:119, n. 119).

signify the commitment of the home to the love of God, and/or serve as a catalyst of such love by constant recall of the commitment.

The first section can be viewed also as an integrated literary unit wherein the threefold demand to love God is followed by a corresponding threefold elaboration of how God is to be loved. The first demand, "love ... with all your *lev* ('heart')"<sup>37</sup> corresponds to the next verse, "And these words that I command you this day shall be on your *lev*" (6). Since the biblical *lev* can also refer to the faculty of thought and attention,<sup>38</sup> verse six bears a range of meanings, from being totally mindful of God's teachings to taking them wholeheartedly or unreservedly. By using a single term for thought and feeling in verse five,<sup>38</sup> both mind and emotion are enlisted in an all-consuming love.<sup>39</sup> The second demand, "Love ... with all your *nefesh* ('soul')", corresponds to the next two verses: "Review them with your children. Speak about them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up. Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead" (7–8). The biblical *nefesh* can also refer to the body or desires<sup>40</sup> and thus may be said to constitute the

brain with the other senses and powers all be subjugated to His service" (*Sha'arei Sion*, cited by Isaiah Horowitz, *Siddur Sha'ar Ha-Shamayim*, Jerusalem: Levine-Epstein, 1987, p. 23b). Tefillin thus became understood as a device for integrating the totality of human powers, consisting of heart, mind, and senses.

37 Thus LXX translates *dianoia* "mind" instead of *kardia* "heart". See Ibn Ezra and Nahmanides, ad loc., along with Asher b. Saul, *Sefer Ha-Minhagot, Sifran Shel Rishonim*, ed. S. Assaf, Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1935, p. 134.

38 See Num. 15:39; Deut. 8:2,5; 15:9f.; 19:6; 28:47; 29:3; 2 Kings 5:26; Jer. 3:15; 1 Chron. 12:38.

39 For choosing a term because of its double nuance, see William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, New York: New Directions, 1966, p. 102. In Arabic this is called *talhin*: "In *talhin* the author's choice of a particular word instead of its synonym is dictated by his desire to suggest both meanings simultaneously to the reader. The one serves as the primary or dominant meaning and the other as the secondary concept, thus enriching the thought or emotion of the reader" (Shalom Paul, "Polysensuous Polyvalency in Poetic Parallelism", eds. M. Fishbane and E. Tov, *"Sha'arei Talmon": Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1992, p. 148, n. 7).

40 For body, see Gen. 12:5, 14:21; Deut. 19:6, 11, 21; *Sifre Deut.* 32, ed. Finkelstein, p. 55, l. 9 with parallels in n. 6; and *T. Berakhot* 6:7, ed. Lieberman, p. 35, l. 38f. with its citation of Ps. 35:10 which indicates "all parts of the body" (*Midrash Ps.* 18:2). For desires, see



wakefulness.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, in verse eight, the tefillin are either signs which confirm the love of God, and/or devices for its stimulation. In either case, one's mental, physical, and emotional powers become wrapped up in a single all-integrating love.<sup>36</sup> Finally, in verse nine, the entrance mezuzot either

- 35 Both pairs of contrasting phrases are merisms which, by noting both poles of the spectrum, include everything in between. Compare Prov. 6:21–22: “Bind them upon your heart always; tie them around your neck. When you walk, it [sic., they] will lead you; when you lie down, it will watch over you; and when you awake, it will talk with you”. See Weinfeld [above, n. 10], p. 333; Jeffrey Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996, p. 78; and Joseph Qaro, *Kesef Mishneh ad* “Laws of Reciting the Shema”, 1:13.
- 36 Thus the tefillin are placed on the head, and on the arm facing the heart. Whether or not they were placed originally between the eyes and on the palm (see Tigay [above, n. 35], p. 359, n. 32), the moving of the head tefillin from the eyes to the forehead shifted the emphasis from the visual (see Philo, *The Special Laws*, 4:137) to the mental, as the moving of the hand tefillin from the palm to the upper arm added the emphasis of the heart (see *B. Menahot* 37b and *Sifre Deut.*, ed. Finkelstein, p. 64, n. 2). In addition to preventing the straying after the heart or eyes, the tefillin now seek to get us to take their contents to heart and to become mindful of them. Indeed, according to the second-century Christian Apologist, Justin Martyr, God enjoined the fringe of purple dye “in order that you might not forget God; and He commanded a phylactery... and by these means stirring you up to retain a constant remembrance of God” (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 46). Medieval commentators expanded this understanding. For instance, Maimonides saw the tefillin performing a double function. They ward off evil thoughts from entering our mind and direct our “heart to words of truth and righteousness” (“Laws of Prayer”, 4:25). By the 13th century, this emphasis on the head and the heart led to the conclusion that the hand tefillin corresponds to the heart (לבבך) and the head tefillin to the soul (נפשך); (see Moses Coucy, *Sefer Mitsvot Gadol* and Isaac of Corbeil, *Sefer Mitsvot Qatan*, as cited in Menahem Kasher, *Sefer Shema' Yisrael*, Jerusalem: Beth Torah Shelemah, 1980, pp. 190a, 212b), or that the tefillin correspond to the five senses in that the hand tefillin corresponds to the sense of touch, and the head tefillin – with its four parts – to the four senses located in the head, namely, the senses of sight, hearing, smell, and taste (see Menahem Ha-Meiri, *Hibbur Ha-Teshuvah*, 2:2, ed. A. Schreiber, New York, 1950, p. 257; David Ha-Khokhavi, *Sefer Ha-Batim, Migdal David, Sefer Misvah*, ed. M. Hershtler, Jerusalem: Institute Schalem, 1982, p. 63; and the later Moses of Przemysl, *Matteh Mosheh*, ed. M. Knoblowicz, Jerusalem: Osar Haposqim, 1978, p. 49). Accordingly, a meditation for the donning of the tefillin underscores its function in subjugating the heart, mind, and senses to God. It states: “He has commanded us to lay the tefillin upon the hand ... opposite the heart, to subjugate through it the longings and designs of our heart to His service ... and upon the head over against the brain, in order that the soul which is in my

forth the duty of loving God totally. The remaining verses – (6) “And these words that I command you this day shall be on your heart. (7) Review them with your children. Speak about them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up. (8) Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead. (9) Inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” – are all subsumed under the duty “of studying His words”.

For the summary to be exhaustive, Maimonides must subsume the laying of tefillin of verse eight as well as the affixing of the mezuzah of verse nine under the rubric “of studying His words”. Such an assumption can be supported by referring to the biblical material contained in the tefillin<sup>30</sup> and the mezuzah.<sup>31</sup> Elsewhere, Maimonides views verses six through nine as a means of coming to the love of God, or/and as a means for its expression.<sup>32</sup> According to the former, the constant involvement with the commandments leads to the love of God.<sup>33</sup> According to the latter, the love of God leads to the fulfilling of the commandments out of love. The love of God thus serves as both catalyst and consummation, as both stimulus and achievement.<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, verse seven asserts that the love of God either generates, and/or is generated by inducing others, especially one's progeny, to accept God's words and by being involved with them at all places – at home or away, and all times – retiring or rising, that is during the normal periods of sleep and

30 Ex. 13:1–10; 11–16; and the first two sections of the Shema' (Deut. 6:5–9; 11:13–21).

31 Deut. 6:4–9; 11:13–21.

32 “The Laws of Repentance”, 10:2–3. Similarly, Bahya ibn Paquda, a century earlier, explained the love as the consummation of the wholehearted service to God (*Duties of the Heart* 10:3, Jerusalem: Feldheim, 1970, 2:350), and the tefillin and mezuzah as the means to “cause us to remember the Creator, love Him with a perfect heart, and yearn for Him” (ibid. 1, Preliminary [1:57]). There are various ways of grasping the tefillin as symbols of love. RaSHBaM (to Ex. 13:9) grasped them in terms of The Song of Songs 8:6, understanding the verse as saying, “Set Me as a seal upon your heart; as a seal upon your arm”, while *Tiqqune Ha-Zohar* (ed. R. Margoliot, Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1994, 10, p. 26a) understood them in terms of bridal jewelry: the head tefillin serves as the bride's golden wreath and the arm tefillin as her arm band.

33 Based on *Sifre Deut.* 33, p. 59, ll. 4–8; see *Sefer Ha-Hinukh*, Mitsvah 418; and below, part B.

34 So Isadore Twersky, *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980, p. 262, n. 49.



the first over the second, but not for the presence of the third.

The relationship of the third section to the first two has challenged the ingenuity of ancient, medieval, and modern scholars alike. In antiquity, R. Simeon b. Yohai argued that the sequence of the three sections follows a functional order in which the first section focuses on studying, the second on teaching, and the last on doing.<sup>26</sup> The Talmud questions the validity of these distinctions, noting that the first section contains all three elements – study, teaching, and doing, the second – teaching and doing, and the third – doing.<sup>27</sup> In any event, there is no explanation for the specific content of the third section since the alleged emphasis on doing is equally applicable to a host of biblical passages.

In the medieval period, Maimonides explained their sequence as follows:

The section beginning, “Hear O Israel” is recited first, because it sets forth the duties of acknowledging the Unity of God, loving Him, and studying His words. This is the great and essential matter on which all depends. Then, the section beginning, “And it shall come to pass” is read. This contains a charge to fulfill all the other commandments. Finally, the section concerning fringes is read, as it also contains a charge to remember all the commandments.<sup>28</sup>

Maimonides incorporated part of the rabbinic explanations into his own. Following R. Joshua b. Korha, he views the first two sections as focusing on the acknowledgment of God and His commandments. Following R. Simeon b. Yohai, he views the first unit as focusing on study. His epitome of the three sections, however, suffers from the same weakness as theirs, namely, it explains the primacy of the first without explaining the distinctive significance of the remaining two.

Maimonides divides the first section into three parts: The Shema’ verse – “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One” (Deut. 6:4) – sets forth the duty of acknowledging the Unity of God. The next verse – (5) You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart / mind or unreservedly, with all your soul / body (or desires) and with all your might/means (or /utmost)<sup>29</sup> – sets

26 *Sifre Num.* 115, ed. Horovitz, p. 126; *B. Berakhot* 14b.

27 *B. Berakhot* 14b.

28 “The Laws of Reciting the Shema’”, 1:2; see *Lehem Mishneh*, ad loc.

29 On the polysemic nature of the Hebrew see below.

eternity" – is performed. There is also evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls of Qumran that readings of Scripture and explication of laws were followed by communal recitation of blessings.<sup>21</sup>

The rabbinic liturgy added a blessing before the Torah lectionary just as it added one in the case of the biblically mandated post-prandial blessing.<sup>22</sup> In each case, the rabbinic liturgical construct is comprised of a biblical reading encased in blessings.

### C. The Sequence and Content of the Biblical Sections

In addition to formalizing liturgy by encasing a biblical lectionary with blessings, liturgy is formalized by acquiring a fixed sequence. Fixed sequences characterize several liturgical units, such as the Hallel, the Amidah, the liturgical reading of the Megillah, the Shema', and the blessings for fast days as well as those for Rosh Hashanah.<sup>23</sup>

The Shema' is unique in that it consists of three noncontiguous biblical sections. The juxtaposition and sequence of the three demands explanation. The sequence of the first two sections of the Shema', according to R. Joshua b. Korha, adheres to a theological pattern,<sup>24</sup> in which the first section (Deut. 6:4–9), because it constitutes "the authority of God's kingship", precedes the second (Deut. 11:13–21), which constitutes "the authority of the commandments".<sup>25</sup> This theological explanation accounts for the priority of

21 See *The Rule of the Community (1QS)* 6:6–8.

22 Deut. 8:10; see *Mekhilta Bo* 16, ed. Horovitz-Rabin, p. 61 with parallels; and *Talmudic Encyclopedia* [Hebrew], 22 vols., Jerusalem: Talmudic Encyclopedia Institute, 1955–1994, 4:617. According to Josephus, *War* 2.8.5 (128–131), the idea that the table served as an altar along with the practice of pre- and post-prandial blessings already characterized the Essene meal. At Qumran the priests offered the blessing over group meals, some of which were occasions of study (see *CD* 13:2–3; *1QS* 6 2–8; and *1QS<sup>a</sup>* 2:17–21).

23 See *T. Berakhot* 2:3–4, *T. Megillah* 2:1–3; *M. Ta'anit* 2:2–4; and *M. Rosh Hashanah* 4:5. A similar situation obtains at Qumran; see Bilhah Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry*, Leiden: Brill, 1994, pp. 20–22.

24 As do the three blessings of Rosh Hashanah; see *Sifre Num.*, *Be-Ha'alotkha*, 77, p. 71ff., with Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-fshutah* [above, n. 14] 5:1024f. ll. 44–45. Following suit, amoraim sought to account for the sequence of other liturgical constructs such as the Amidah (*B. Berakhot* 34a; *J. Berakhot* 2:4, 4d; *B. Megillah* 17b) and the Hallel (*J. Berakhot* 2:4, 4d; *Lev. Rabbah* 30,4, ed. Margulies, p. 701).

25 *M. Berakhot* 2:2.



reading of the other Scrolls.<sup>16</sup> Even the biblical selections known as *Pesukei De-Zimra*, which serve as an overture to the morning recitation of the Shema and its blessings, became encased in a set of blessings upon being formalized as a liturgical unit<sup>17</sup> based on the model of the Hallel service.<sup>18</sup>

The association of blessings with lectionary readings harks back to the Book of Psalms. Four of the five books of Psalms conclude with a blessing formula.<sup>19</sup> The formula was then quite fluid as there are four different formulations. In each case, their function is to elicit a communal response upon completion of the public recitation. This response is made explicit in the last one, where it states: "Blessed is the Lord, God of Israel, from eternity to eternity. Let all the people say: 'Amen', 'Hallelujah'" (Ps. 106:48; see 1 Chron. 16:36). Similarly, the Book of Nehemiah records that after reading from the Torah, "The Levites ... said, 'Bless the Lord your God who is from eternity to eternity ...'" (9:5).<sup>20</sup> In fact, by proclaiming the content of the verse from Psalms – "Blessed is the Lord, God of Israel, from eternity to eternity" – the mandate of Nehemiah – "Bless the Lord your God who is from eternity to

16 See *M. Megillah* 4:1; *J. Megillah* 3:8, 74b; *B. Berakhot* 21a; *Deut. Rabbah* 4:1, 8:1, 11:6; and *Massekhet Sofrim* 12:3–4, and 14:1, ed. Higger, pp. 226–228 and 251f., notes thereto, and p. 51. According to Maimonides, the lectionary reading of the king on the second day of Sukkot also follows the pattern of the synagogue lectionary readings ("Laws of Hagigah", 3:1).

17 See *Siddur Rav Sa'adyah Gaon*, eds. I. Davidson et al., Jerusalem: Reuben Mass, 1970, p. 32; Abraham b. Nathan of Lunel, *Sefer Ha-Manhig*, ed. Y. Raphael, 2 vols., Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1978, 1:42, n. 62; Leon J. Liebreich, "The Pesuke De-Zimra Benedictions", *JQR* 41 (1950), p. 195f.; and Naphtali Wieder, "Old Palestinian Ritual – New Sources", *JJS* 5 (1954), pp. 65–68.

18 So *Teshuvot Ha-Geonim*, ed. E. Hurvits, New York, 1995, p. 30; Rashi, top of *B. Berakhot* 11b; Abraham b. Isaac of Narbonne, *Sefer Ha-Eshkol*, ed. S. Albeck, Jerusalem: Wagschal, 1984, p. 11; Zidkeiah b. Abraham Harofe, *Shibolei Ha-Leqet Ha-Shalem*, ed. S. Mirsky, New York: Sura, 1966, section 7, p. 147; and *Siddur of R. Solomon ben Samson of Garmaise including the Siddur of the Haside Ashkenas* [Hebrew], ed. M. Hershler, Jerusalem: Hemed, 1971, p. 75; see Louis Ginzberg, *A Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud* [Hebrew], 4 vols., New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 1941–1961 [henceforth *Commentary*] 4:127–129.

19 Pss. 41:14; 72:18f; 89:53; 106:47f.

20 See Menachem Haran, "The Four Blessings and the Five Books in the Book of Psalms" [Hebrew], *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Science and Humanities* 8.1 (1989), p. 13ff.

biblical sections, the first two from the Book of Deuteronomy (6:4–9; 11:13–21) and the third from the Book of Numbers (15:37–41). The first section, and possibly the second, may be alluded to along with the Decalogue already in Pss. 50:7 and 81:9–11.<sup>10</sup> It is possible that the two sections are linked to the Exodus by Josephus, who associates a prayer expressing gratitude for the Exodus with a twice-daily service that transpires at dawn and at the hour for turning to repose.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, he may only be referring to a prayer such as the one recorded in the Talmud that states: “We are grateful to You for having taken us out of Egypt and having redeemed us from the house of bondage in order to praise Your name”.<sup>12</sup> In any case, all three sections appear in the report of the Temple service in *M. Tamid* 5:1 along with the Decalogue<sup>13</sup> and other selections. As an independent unit, without the Decalogue, they first appear, around the third century, in *M. Berakhot* 2:2 and in *Sifre Deut.* 34–35. It follows that between 70 CE and circa 200 CE the three Shema' sections achieved their present liturgical status and order.<sup>14</sup>

The encasement of the biblical lectionary with blessings formalizes the Shema' as liturgy. The result is a tripartite pattern of blessing(s), Bible, blessing(s). This pattern, common in the classical liturgy, accounts for the structure of the Temple service,<sup>15</sup> the Hallel service, the lectionary readings of the Torah, the Haftarah, the Scroll of Esther and, in some rites, the liturgical

10 See Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy I–II* (AB 5), New York: Doubleday, 1991, pp. 257–262.

11 Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.8.13 (212); see Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. – A.D. 135)*, eds. G. Vermes et al., 3 vols., Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973–1987, 2:455, n. 153; Shlomo Naeh and Aharon Shemesh, “The Manna Story and the Time of the Morning Prayer” [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 64 (1995), p. 335.

12 *J. Berakhot* 1:5, 3d; *B. Berakhot* 14b.

13 The lack of correspondence between this report and the later rabbinic liturgy militates against it being a retrojection. Were it so, it would have excluded the Decalogue. Indeed, the belief that it was in the Temple liturgy prompted several efforts to reintroduce it in the daily liturgy, all of which failed; see *B. Berakhot* 12a.

14 The third section of the Shema', however, was still not the universal norm in the evening service as late as the amoraic period; see Saul Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-fshutah*, 10 vols., New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 1955–1988, 1:12, l. 41; and R. Hizqiya de Silva, *Pri Hadash apud Orah Hayyim* 67; cf., however, *Sifre Deut.*, ed. Finkelstein, p. 60, n. 14.

15 *M. Tamid* 5:1.



## II. The Shema' Liturgy

### A. The Text

A full text of the Shema' and its blessings becomes available at the earliest only in the ninth century in the *Order of Prayers* by Amram Gaon<sup>5</sup> and in the fragments of the Genizah of the synagogue of Fostat, Cairo, built in 882.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, the text in substance must hark back at least to the first centuries of the common era as its structure and motifs pervade early liturgical poetry (*piyyutim*),<sup>7</sup> whereas its motifs, concluding perorations, structure, and accompanying blessings all figure prominently in the Mishnah and the Talmud.<sup>8</sup> Also its angelology and *Qedushah/Sanctus* reflect that of Second Temple times.<sup>9</sup>

### B. The Structure

The Shema' liturgy derives its name from the first word of its opening verse – “Shema' [= Hear] O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deut. 6:4). This verse heads a constellation, in the liturgy and the Mishnah, of three

5 *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, ed. D. Goldschmidt, Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1971, pp. 12–14, 19f. Despite the availability of a critical edition, there still remains much post-Amram material embedded in the work; see Yerahmiel (Robert) Brody, “The Enigma of *Seder Rav 'Amram*” [Hebrew], eds. S. Elizur et al., *Knesset Ezra: Literature and Life in the Synagogue, Studies Presented to Ezra Fleischer*, Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 1994, pp. 21–34. Nonetheless, in the absence of a better alternative, this text forms the base-text of this study with an eye to the significant variants.

6 For the major publications of the fragments, see Stefan C. Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer: New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 366f., n. 30; and E. Fleischer, “Qeta'im Me-Qovsei Tefillah Eres-yisraeliim Min Ha-Genizah”, *Koves Al Yad* 13 (23) Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1996, p. 93, nn. 2–3.

7 See Fleischer, “Studies in the Structural Development of the *Piyyutim* of *ha-me'orot ve-ha-'ahavah*” [Hebrew], *Simon Halkin Jubilee Volume*, Jerusalem, 1975, pp. 367–372.

8 As will be noted below.

9 See Rachel Elior, “From Earthly Temple to Heavenly Shrines: Prayer and Sacred Liturgy in the *Hekhalot* Literature and Its Relation to Temple Traditions” [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 64 (1995), pp. 341–380; Esther Chazon, “The *Qedushah* Liturgy and its History in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls”, *From Qumran to Cairo: Studies in the History of Prayer*, ed. J. Tabor, Jerusalem: Orhot Press, 1999, pp. 7–17, and below, n. 177.

Structures of texts and their meaning do not exist independently. Meanings of texts are linked to their structures as their structures are reflexes of their meanings. Thus, changes in meaning can bring about changes in our perception of the structure, as changes in our perception of the structure can generate changes in meaning. This contrasts with the widespread belief that textual structures are self-evident features. On the contrary, we are arguing that structures are features that emerge in the light of perceptions of meaning.

With regard to the liturgy of the Shema', our understanding of it is a function of our perception of its structure. Alternative understandings of its structure will thus prompt alternative meanings. Indeed, the traditional nomenclature for the Shema' liturgy, namely, "The Shema' and its Blessings", assumes a certain structure that follows a specific way of reading the liturgical text. One of the goals of this study is to show the inadequacy of that reading, and thus the inadequacy of the structure assumed by the title "The Shema' and its Blessings". Our preferred title, "The Shema' liturgy", of course assumes an alternative structure. One of the tasks of this study is to demonstrate the validity of this title.

As long as historical knowledge results from ways of reading and construing texts, different ways of reading and construing texts will generate different historical conclusions. Literary analysis no more occurs in a historical vacuum than historical analysis occurs in a literary vacuum. Novel perspectives in literary analysis are apt to yield new historical information as new historical information is apt to generate alternative literary analyses. It is only through a double dialectic between literary and historical approaches that such understandings are achieved.<sup>3</sup> By showing how the refinement of the operations of ideology and aesthetics can lead to novel historiographical insights, studies such as this illustrate how "historiography mediates between ideology and aesthetics".<sup>4</sup>

"Historicism, History, and the Figurative Imagination", *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, pp. 101–120.

3 As detailed by Lionel Gossman, *Between History and Literature*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990, Part Three. Such an understanding of the dialectic can counter the objections against doing historical research and literary criticism simultaneously (cf. Stanley Fish, *Professional Correctness: Literary Studies and Political Change*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, pp. 83–85).

4 Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (above, n. 1), p. 45.



ideological principle.<sup>1</sup> Through the prism of these questions we shall analyze the content of the Shema' liturgy, delineate its mode of presentation, and ascertain its purpose. In so doing, we shall show how historical issues, aesthetic considerations, and ideological factors converge to illuminate the full meaning of the Shema' liturgy.

The three questions are listed sequentially for purposes of analysis, even though, in the actual inquiry, they are interdependent. This is because the why of the liturgy is informed by the how, which in turn is informed by the what. Similarly, in reverse order, the what is informed by the how, which in turn is informed by the why. The assumption is that any analysis of content involves an analysis of form and purpose. Thus, a determination of the form of the Shema' liturgy is dependent upon an assessment of its content, which in turn is dependent upon a judgment of its purpose, and vice versa. Such an analysis allows us to see that our grasp of the ideology and purpose of the liturgy is informed by our perception of its structure, which in turn is informed by our understanding of what it says. It is precisely the interrelationship of the three that forms the basis of our strategy of interpretation. The point is that our interpretive strategies inform the shape of our reading as the text itself shapes our interpretive strategies.<sup>2</sup>

recent publications of Qumran material, other from newly published research on liturgy and *piyyut*, still other from literary theory, all of which have contributed to the reconceptualizing of the function of the Shema' liturgy. All these revisions underscore for me how much scholarship should be wary of definitive statements as opposed to offering progress reports, since in actuality all works of humanistic scholarship are works in progress, or at least should be. I am grateful to Professors Ruth Langer and Joseph Tabory for their comments, and especially to the latter for his patience and editorial diligence.

- 1 See Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, Bloomington: Indiana University, 1985, p. 41. For methodology in the study of liturgy, see Reuven Kimelman, "Liturgical Studies in the 90's", *Jewish Book Annual* 52 (1994–1995/5755), p. 71.
- 2 For the literary theory that informs this reading see Stanley Fish, "Introduction", *Is There a Text in This Class: The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980; Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, chapters 7–8; and Reuven Kimelman, "The Seduction of Eve and the Exegetical Politics of Gender", *Biblical Interpretation: A Journal of Contemporary Approaches* 3 (1996), pp. 1–6, 13f., n. 27. The ultimate inseparability of the what and how of historiography forms the major thrust of the analysis of historical writing in the works of Hayden White, as best exemplified by his

# The Shema' Liturgy: From Covenant Ceremony to Coronation

REUVEN KIMELMAN

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## I. Prologue: Method

This reading of the Shema' liturgy, traditionally known as the Shema' and its blessings, revolves around three questions: what are readers apprised of, how are they apprised, and why. This what, how, and why correspond in literary criticism to the historiographic function, the aesthetic factor, and the

\* This study supersedes my article, "The Shema' and Its Rhetoric: the Case for the Shema' Being More than Creation, Revelation, and Redemption", *Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 2 (1992): 111–156, which in turn superseded "The 'Shema' and Its Blessings: The Realization of God's Kingship", *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity*, ed. L. Levine, The American Schools of Oriental Research, 1987: 73–86. Some of the revision is due to



articles which focusses mostly on prayer itself. We hope that we will be able to produce future volumes which will include a broader scope of papers on the various aspects of synagogue life: art and architecture, music and poetry, history and sociology. It is appropriate to introduce a volume dedicated to synagogue life with a prayer that it may make a contribution to the understanding of the significance of the synagogue in the life and history of the Jewish people.

*J. Tabory*

## INTRODUCTION

It is widely assumed that the synagogue's main function is to serve as an alternative to the Holy Temple as a place in which God may be worshipped. However, as the Temple, the synagogue also serves as a place where Jews meet together. This meeting has not always been a calm one. At times, the gathering in the synagogue could serve as a focus for arguments and bitter disagreements. These disagreements highlighted the great difference between the Temple and the synagogue. A disagreement in the Temple had to find a resolution. There was no place to worship God other than the Temple on Mount Moriah. Anybody who abandoned the Temple or sought to find another place to worship God was a separatist. But the individual synagogue was never unique. Anybody could leave a particular synagogue and establish a new one, maintaining that his synagogue was the only place where God was being worshipped properly.

The synagogue should also serve as a gathering place for researches in the field of Judaic studies. Many people are researching various aspects of synagogue life. The most prominent researches about the synagogue are those carried out in the fields of archaeology and architecture. However, many other aspects of the synagogue are also subjects of research. Among the more obvious ones are the study of prayer itself and the synagogal poetry which is so much a part of prayer. Synagogue music, synagogue art and other aspects of synagogue life clearly have something in common. However, there is no gathering place for people who are interested in these particular subjects to meet each other. The present situation is analogous to the synagogue of Alexandria which had separate seating areas for people of each trade, but no common meeting place where they could learn one from another.

In order to create such a gathering place, a group of scholars from various fields got together and decided to create a new forum dedicated to synagogue life. We intend this forum to be an interdisciplinary meeting place. We proudly present the first fruit of our efforts, a collection of





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Joseph Tabory



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