

Let Our Will Be Your Will

R. Yonatan Cohen, Congregation Beth Israel
In Memory of Eli Resnikoff, z"l and Esther Schickman, z"l
Shabbat HaGadol 5770

<p>1. Dayenu</p> <p>How many levels of favors has the Omnipresent One bestowed upon us!</p> <p>If He had brought us out from Egypt, and had not carried out judgments against them <i>Dayenu</i>, it would have sufficed us! [...]</p> <p>If He had given us the Torah, and had not brought us into the land of Israel <i>Dayenu</i>, it would have sufficed us!</p> <p>If He had brought us into the land of Israel, and had not built for us the Holy Temple <i>Dayenu</i>, it would have sufficed us!</p>	<p>דיינו</p> <p>כמה מעלות טובות למקום עלינו!</p> <p>אלו הוציאנו ממצרים ולא עשה בהם שפטים , דיינו. [...]</p> <p>אלו נתן לנו את התורה ולא הכניסנו לארץ ישראל, דיינו.</p> <p>אלו הכניסנו לארץ ישראל ולא בנה לנו את בית הבחירה דיינו.</p>
<p>2. Mishnah Pesachim 10:6</p> <p>How far does one recite Hallel [prior to the Passover meal]? Beth Shammai maintain: Until 'As a joyous mother of children,' while Beth Hillel say: Until 'The flint into a fountain of waters,' afterwards one concludes with a blessing of redemption. R. Tarfon used to say: 'Who redeemed us and our fathers from Egypt,' but he did not conclude [with a blessing]. R. Akiva said: 'So may the Lord our God and God of our fathers bring us to other holidays and festivals that will come to us in peace, gladdened in the rebuilding of Your city, and joyful in Your service, and there we will partake of the sacrifices and the Passover offerings, etc.' As far as 'Blessed are You God, Who redeemed Israel.'</p>	<p>משנה מסכת פסחים פרק י</p> <p>משנה ו</p> <p>עד היכן הוא אומר בית שמאי אומרים עד אם הבנים שמחה ובית הלל אומרים עד חלמיש למעינו מים והותם בגאולה רבי טרפון אומר אשר גאלנו וגאל את אבותינו ממצרים ולא היה חותם רבי עקיבא אומר כן ה' אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו יגיענו למועדים ולרגלים אחרים הבאים לקראתנו לשלום שמחים בבנין עירך וששים בעבודתך ונאכל שם מן הזבחים ומן הפסחים כו' עד ברוך אתה ה' גאל ישראל :</p>
<p>3. R. Obadiah of Bertinoro (15th Cen.), Commentary on Mishnah Pesachim 10:6</p> <p>"Afterwards one concludes with a blessing of redemption" – [...] Since the anonymous speaker of the Mishnah did not specify the content of this blessing, R. Tarfon and R. Akiva each offered their own interpretations. R. Tarfon maintained that one begins the blessing with "<i>baruch</i>" (blessed are You, etc.) and does not conclude it by repeating "<i>baruch</i>" (blessed are You, etc.) at the very end, similar to the case of blessings for fruits and blessings recited prior to the performance of mitzvot, which is the standard form for blessings of thanksgiving. In contrast, R. Akiva maintained that we also conclude the blessing with "<i>baruch</i>" (blessed are You, etc.), for one adds to the blessing placating (<i>ritzoy</i>) and supplicating words, such as "so may the Lord...bring us to other holidays, etc."</p>	<p>ר' עובדיה מברטנורא מסכת פסחים פרק י</p> <p>משנה ו</p> <p>והותם בגאולה - ולא פירש תנא קמא למלתיא היאך מברכין אותה, ואתו ר' טרפון ור' עקיבא לפרושי למלתיא, ר' טרפון אומר פותח בה בברוך ואינו חותם בברוך, מדי דהוה אברכת הפירות וברכות המצות דכולה חדא הודאה היא. ולר"ע חותמין בה בברוך, לפי שמוסיף בה דברי רצוי ובקשה כן יגיענו וכו'.</p>
<p>4. Kaplan, Zvi. "Tarfon." <i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>. Ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. 2nd ed. Vol. 19. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007. 512-513. Gale Virtual Reference Library. Web. 25 Mar. 2010.</p> <p>TARFON <i>tanna</i> in the generation after the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E.; one of the leading scholars of Yavneh. Tarfon was a priest. The Temple was still standing in his youth, and he recounts what he saw there (TJ, Yoma 1:1; 3:7; et al.). He may have studied under Johanab b. Zakkai, but in any case it is certain that he already occupied an honored place among the scholars of the second generation of <i>tannaim</i> (Yad. 4:3), and his greatness is expressed in the designations given him: "the father of all Israel" and "the teacher of all Israel." [...] Tarfon's main disputant was Akiva and many halakhic discussions between them are recorded. He is also mentioned among the scholars who were with Akiva in Bene-Berak on the night of Passover "and spoke about the Exodus from Egypt the whole of that night" (according to the Passover <i>Haggadah</i>, cf. Tosef. Pes. 10:12). Akiva esteemed Tarfon as "a publicly recognized expert" (Sanh. 33a), and was most particular about his dignity, calling him <i>ha-zaken</i> ("the elder"; Sif. Num. 148; Men. 68b). This esteem was mutual, and Tarfon</p>	

addressed Akiva as "my teacher and master" (Kal.) and said to him: "anyone who is separated from you is as if he is separated from life" (Sifra, Nedavah 4:5; et al.). On the other hand there is a difference of opinion in the Talmud (Ket. 84b) as to whether Tarfon was the teacher or the colleague of Akiva.

5. BT Gittin 56a-56b

The *biryoni* [zealot bands who defended Jerusalem] were then in the city. The Rabbis said to them: Let us go out and make peace with them [the Romans]. They would not let them, but on the contrary said, Let us go out and fight them. The Rabbis said: You will not succeed. They then rose up and burnt the stores of wheat and barley so that a famine ensued...

Abba Sikra the head of the *biryoni* in Jerusalem was the son of the sister of Rabban Johanan b. Zakkai. [The latter] sent to him saying, Come to visit me privately. When he came he said to him, How long are you going to carry on in this way and kill all the people with starvation? He replied: What can I do? If I say a word to them, they will kill me. He said: Devise some plan for me to escape. Perhaps I shall be able to save a little. He said to him: Pretend to be ill, and let everyone come to inquire about you. Bring something ill smelling and put it by you so that they will say you are dead. Let then your disciples get under your bed, but no others, so that they shall not notice that you are still light, since they know that a living being is lighter than a corpse. He did so, and R. Eliezer went under the bier from one side and R. Joshua from the other.... They opened a town gate for him and he got out.

When he reached the Romans he said, Peace to you, O king, peace to you, O king. He [Vespasian] said: Your life is forfeit on two counts, one because I am not a king and you call me king, and again, if I am a king, why did you not come to me before now? He replied: As for your saying that you are not a king, in truth you are a king, since if you were not a king Jerusalem would not be delivered into your hand... As for your question, why if you are a king, I did not come to you till now, the answer is that the *biryoni* among us did not let me...

At this point a messenger came to him from Rome saying, Up, for the Emperor is dead, and the notables of Rome have decided to make you head [of the State]...He [Vespasian] said to him; I am now going, and will send someone to take my place. You can, however, make a request of me and I will grant it. He said to him: Give me Yavneh and its Wise Men, and the family chain of Rabban Gamaliel, and physicians to heal R. Zadok. R. Joseph, or some say R. Akiba, applied to him the verse, '[God] turns wise men backward and makes their knowledge foolish'. He ought to have said to him; Let them [the Jews] off this time. He, however, thought that so much he would not grant, and so even a little would not be saved.

6. BT Brachot 28b

When Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai fell ill, his disciples went in to visit him. When he saw them he began to weep. His disciples said to him: Lamp of Israel, pillar of the right hand, mighty hammer! Why do must you weep? He replied: If I were being taken today before a human king who is here today and tomorrow in the grave, whose anger, if he is angry with me, does not last forever, who, if he imprisons me, does not imprison me forever, and who, if he puts me to death, does not put me to everlasting death, and whom I can persuade with words and bribe with money, even so I would weep. Now that I am being taken before the supreme King of Kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, who lives and endures forever and ever, whose anger, if He is angry with me, is an everlasting anger, who if He imprisons me imprisons me forever, who if He puts me to death puts me to death for ever, and whom I cannot persuade with words or bribe with

תלמוד בבלי מסכת גיטין דף נו עמוד א- תלמוד בבלי מסכת גיטין דף נו עמוד ב

אבא סקרא ריש בריוני דירושלים בר אחתיה דרבן יוחנן בן זכאי הוה, שלח ליה: תא בצינעא לגבאי. אתא, א"ל: עד אימת עבדיתו הכי, וקטליתו ליה לעלמא בכפנא? א"ל: מאי איעביד, דאי אמינא להו מידי קטלו לי! א"ל: חזי לי תקנתא לדידי דאיפוק, אפשר דהוי הצלה פורתא. א"ל: נקוט נפשך בקצירי, וליתי כולי עלמא ולישיילו בך, ואייתי מידי סריא ואגני גבך, ולימרו דנח נפשך, וליעיילו בך תלמידך ולא ליעול בך איניש אחרינא, דלא לרגשן בך דקליל את, דאינהו ידעי דחייא קליל ממיתא. עביד הכי, נכנס בו רבי אליעזר מצד אחד ורבי יהושע מצד אחר... פתחו ליה בבא, נפק. כי מטא להתם, אמר: שלמא עלך מלכא, שלמא עלך מלכא! א"ל: מיחייבת תרי קטלא, חדא, דלאו מלכא אנא וקא קרית לי מלכא! ותו, אי מלכא אנא, עד האידנא אמאי לא אתית לגבאי? א"ל: דקאמרת לאו מלכא אנא, איברא מלכא את, דאי לאו מלכא את לא מימסרא ירושלים בידך... ודקאמרת אי מלכא אנא אמאי לא קאתית לגבאי עד האידנא? בריוני דאית בן לא שבקינן....

אדהכי אתי פריסתקא עליה מרומי, אמר ליה: קום, דמית ליה קיסר, ואמרי הנהו חשיבי דרומי לאותיבך ברישא... אמר ליה: מיזל אזילנא ואיניש אחרינא משדרנא, אלא בעי מינאי מידי דאתן לך. אמר ליה: תן לי יבנה וחכמיה, ושושילתא דרבן גמליאל, ואסוותא דמסיין ליה לרבי צדוק. קרי עליה רב יוסף, ואתימא רבי עקיבא+ ישיעיהו מד + משיב חכמים אחר ודעתם יסכל, איבעי למימר ליה לשבקינהו הדא זימנא. והוא סבר, דלמא כולי האי לא עביד, והצלה פורתא נמי לא הוי.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף כז עמוד ב

וכשחלה רבי יוחנן בן זכאי, נכנסו תלמידיו לבקרו. כיון שראה אותם התחיל לבכות. אמרו לו תלמידיו: נר ישראל, עמוד הימיני, פטיש החזק, מפני מה אתה בוכה? אמר להם: אילו לפני מלך בשר ודם היו מוליכין אותי, שהיום כאן ומחר בקבר, שאם כועס עלי - אין כעסו כעס עולם, ואם אוסרני - אין איסורו איסור עולם, ואם ממיתני - אין מיתתו מיתת עולם, ואני יכול לפייסו בדברים ולשחדו בממון - אף על פי כן הייתי בוכה; ועכשיו שמוליכים אותי לפני מלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא, שהוא חי וקיים לעולם ולעולמי עולמים, שאם כועס עלי - כעסו כעס עולם, ואם אוסרני - איסורו איסור עולם, ואם ממיתני -

<p>money — nay more, when there are two ways before me, one leading to Paradise and the other to <i>Gehinnom</i> [hell], and I do not know by which I shall be taken, shall I not weep? They said to him: Master, bless us. He said to them: May it be [God's] will that the fear of heaven shall be upon you like the fear of flesh and blood. His disciples said to him: Is that all? He said to them: If only [you can attain this]! You can see [how important this is], for when a man wants to commit a transgression, he says, I hope no man will see me. At the moment of his departure he said to them: Remove the vessels so that they shall not become unclean, and prepare a throne for Hezekiah the king of Judah who is coming.</p>	<p>מיתתו מיתת עולם, ואיני יכול לפייסו בדברים ולא לשחדו בממון; ולא עוד, אלא שיש לפני שני דרכים, אחת של גן עדן ואחת של גיהנם, ואיני יודע באיזו מוליכים אותי - ולא אבכה? אמרו לו: רבינו, ברכנו! אמר להם: יהי רצון שתהא מורא שמים עליכם כמורא בשר ודם. אמרו לו תלמידיו: עד כאן? - אמר להם: ולואי! תדעו, כשאדם עובר עבירה אומר: שלא יראני אדם. בשעת פטירתו, אמר להם: פנו כלים מפני הטומאה, והכינו כסא לחזקיהו מלך יהודה שבא</p>
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7. R. J. B. Soloveitchik, *The Rav Speaks*, pp. 51-52

Rav Yochanan had to render his decision instantaneously. The decision was intuitive. Who at the time could foresee how Vespasian would react to a plea to spare Jerusalem? This difficult question, perhaps the most difficult question in Jewish history, Rav Yochanan had to decide by himself, without consultation with colleagues, in a fleeting moment! He was therefore never certain that he had decided correctly. On the one hand it appeared to him that he could have influenced Vespasian to spare Jerusalem, as Rav Yosef and Rabbi Akiba thought, and his heart bled at not having asked for it. On the other hand, he thought: “It was forbidden to place in possible danger the lives of the sages of Yavneh and the Oral Law and Tradition”. Notwithstanding the sanctity and importance of the Temple, national existence is not dependent on it. However, without the Oral Law and Tradition, the Jewish people would not continue to exist even for a brief period of time.

How great was his distress, what mental anguish he suffered, how many restless nights and sorrow-filled days ensued for Rav Yochanan ben Zakkai because of this doubt. We cannot even imagine it. Thus it was that in the last moments of his life, when parting from his disciples, he declared that above all else he most feared the reckoning that he would have to render before God for his decision. There were two paths – one correct, the other not correct; one leading to paradise, the other to hell. But when it comes to such decisions, no man born of woman can know if he had taken the correct path.

If the great Rav Yochanan ben Zakkai never ceased blaming himself for that historic decision, assuredly the dilemma of the two paths must always be before us as well. We should not vaingloriously assume that our actions are always the right ones.

8. Aryeh Eldad, *Polmos HaChurban vLekachav* (Polemics of the Destruction and its Lessons)

Seemingly, Rav Yochanan ben Zakkai’s actions preserved Judaism in a new form that firmly set the Diaspora as a viable option for the existence of the Jewish people [i.e. as a people without need for a land]. 1900 years of history seemingly proved that R. Yochanan was right and that the rebels were wrong. Then the 20th century came and proved the very opposite: life in the Diaspora, the fruit of the labors of Yavneh and its sages ultimately brought about a great destruction. Had the Jews rebelled earlier against the nations of the world, had the Jews established the State of Israel sooner, perhaps a third of the nation would have been saved from annihilation, and millions of others from destruction or assimilation.

<p><u>9. Ones Who Don’t Know How to Ask</u></p> <p>As for the one who does not know how to ask, you must take the initiative, as it is written, “You shall tell your child on that day, ‘Because of this, God did [things] for me when I left Egypt’” (Exodus 13:8).</p>	<p>וְשִׂאֵינָם יוֹדְעִים לְשֹׂאֵל</p> <p>וְשִׂאֵינּוּ יוֹדְעֵי לְשֹׂאֵל - אֵת פֶּתַח לוֹ, שְׂנַמְמֵר: הַגִּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר, בְּעֶבְרַת זֶה עָשָׂה יי לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם.</p>
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10. R. J. B. Soloveitchik, *An Exalted Evening*, pp. 109-110

When Maimonides describes the order of events on the fifteenth night of Nisan (*Hilkhos Hamez u-Mazzah* 8:1), he “forgets” temporarily that he is living approximately one thousand years after the destruction of the Temple and paints the image of the service of this holy festival night in the wealth of colors that dazzle the eyes, that reflect the Passover service as it was celebrated thousands of years ago in ancient Jerusalem and as it once again will be celebrated in the era of the Messiah. Our great master pays no attention to the cruel and bitter present. However, from time to time, he bestirs himself from his ideal dream and romantic vision and finds himself confronted with an exile filled with nightmares and terrors. He states, “So, Lord, our God...bring us to other festivals happy in the building of the city and joyous in Your service...” The present time is only a historical anomaly. The *halakhah* remains in full force, and we hope for and eagerly await the day of Israel’s redemption when the ideal world will triumph over the profane reality.

<p>11. Rambam, Commentary on Mishnah Pesachim 10:6</p> <p>The <i>halakhah</i> (law) is in accordance with R. Akiva.</p>	<p>פירוש המשנה לרמב"ם מסכת פסחים פרק י</p> <p>[ו] הלכה כר' עקיבה.</p>
<p>12. Kiddush for the Second Cup</p> <p>Blessed are You, G-d, our G-d, King of the universe, who has redeemed us and redeemed our fathers from Egypt, and brought us to this night to eat <i>matzah</i> and <i>maror</i>. So may the Lord our God and God of our fathers bring us to other holidays and festivals that will come to us in peace, gladdened in the rebuilding of Your city, and joyful in Your service. Then we shall eat of the sacrifices and of the Passover-offerings whose blood shall be sprinkled on the wall of Your altar <i>for acceptance</i> (<i>le'ratzon</i>, literally - satisfactory to Your will); and we shall thank You with a new song for our redemption and for the deliverance of our souls. Blessed are You, G-d, who redeemed Israel. Blessed are You, L-rd, our G-d, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.</p>	<p>אשר גאלנו</p> <p>ברוך אתה יי-א-להינו מלך העולם, אשר גאלנו וגאל את אבותינו ממצרים, והגיענו ללילה הזה לאכול בו מצה ומרור. כן יי-א-להינו ואלהי אבותינו יגיענו למועדים ולרגלים אחרים הבאים לקראתנו לשלום, שמחים בבנינו עירה וְששים בעבודתך. ונאכל שם מן הנבחים ומן הפסחים אשר יגיע דמם על קיר מזבחת לרצון, ונודה לך שיר קדש על גאלתנו ועל פדות נפשנו. ברוך אתה יי-א-ל גאל ישראל.</p> <p>ברוך אתה יי-א-להינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן.</p>
<p>13. Rav Kook, Mussar Avicha (Your Father's Teachings)</p> <p>The Will (Ratzon)</p> <p>1. It is necessary that the general will be developed to its full potency. Then it is to be conditioned toward holiness. The customary method of its training must be the same for old and young; the will must be enhanced, strengthened, purified and given a bent to idealism, all at the same time.</p> <p>4. How high man can rise! He can make his will an active and dominant force in the world, radiating blessing on anyone he chooses and influencing life according to his aspirations. "'And be a blessing' (Gen. 12:2) – you will be a channel of blessing" (Genesis Rabbah 39). One must note clearly this concept of the nature of man and the world, of man's controlling influence on existence. From this lofty height man descends into the practical world and exerts practical domination in external matters, to put nature under his sway. But this is only the outer robe of the inner control, of being a blessing, of blessings being bestowed through him according to his will and speech. "You shall decree, and it shall be established for you, a light will shine in you always" (Job 22:28).</p>	<p>מוסר אביך, הרב קוק</p> <p>רצון</p> <p>א. צריך שיתגדל הרצון בכלל בכחו השלם ואח"כ מפתחים אותו בקודש, ודרך החינוך הרגיל צריך להיות בין לגדולים בין לקטנים הגדלת הרצון והגברתו וצחצוח טהרתו ותעופת האידיאליות שלו כאחת.</p> <p>ד. כמה יכול אדם להתעלות, עד כמה יכול הוא לעשות את רצונו שליט ופועל בעולם, עד כדי לברך את מי שהוא חפץ עד כדי להמשיך סדרי גורל החיים ע"פ המשכת חפצו, "והיה ברכה (בראשית י"ב, 2) – הברכות מסורות לך" (בראשית רבה 39), בבהירות צריכים להביט על יסוד הידיעה הנפלאה הזאת בתכונת האדם והעולם, ביחש האדם לשלטונו על ההויה. מתעופה עליונה זו יורדים לעולם המעשה ומוצאים את השליטה המעשית החיצונית, לרדד את הטבע והיקום תחת רגליו, שהוא רק לבוש חיצוני לאותו השלטון הפנימי שלטון היות ברכה, להיות הברכה באה לרגלו, ונמשכת לרצונו ומוצא שפתיו, ותגור אומר ויקם לך ועל דרכיך נגה אור (איוב כ"ב 28).</p>
<p>14. Nirtzah - Prayer of Acceptance (Conclusion of the Seder)</p> <p>Ended is the Pesach Seder as the Law commands, Its symbols and rules done by our hands; As we were worthy to order it here, So may we do it next year! Pure One who dwells in the heavens on high, Raise up Your people, countless to the eye, Soon may You lead those You planted strong To freedom in Zion in glorious song! Next year in Jerusalem!</p>	<p>נרצה</p> <p>חסל סדור פסח כהלכתו, ככל משפטו וחקתו. כאשר זכינו לסדר אותו כן נזכה לעשותו. זה שוכן מעונה, קומם קהל עדת מי מנה. בקרוב נהל נטעי כנה פדוים לציון ברנה. לשנה הבאה בירושלים. בארץ ישראל אומרים: לשנה הבאה בירושלים הבנויה.</p>